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Theodore Parker's experience
as a minister

THEODORE PARKER'S

EXPERIENCE AS A MINISTER,

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS EARLY LIFE,

AND

EDUCATION FOR THE MINISTRY;

CONTAINED IN A LETTER FROM HIM TO THE MEMBERS OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY OF BOSTON.

BOSTON:
RUFUS LEIGHTON, JR.
1859.

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PREFACE.

The Letter from Mr. Parker to his Congregation, which occupies the greater part of this volume, has been received within a few days. It sufficiently explains itself, and needs no introduction. For the information, however, of those who may not be familiar with the circumstances which gave rise to the other letters which are here printed, it may be well to make the following statements :

Mr. Parker's health, which had been gradually failing for a year or two previous, during the year 1858 became so much impaired as to excite the serious apprehensions of his friends. He continued, however, though suffering much from illness, to preach regularly at the Music Hall, — with two intermissions, of several weeks each, when positively unable to officiate, — up to the 2d of January last, when he delivered a discourse entitled "What Religion may do for a Man : a Sermon for the New Year," which has since been given to the public.

On the following Sunday the Congregation assembled as usual, expecting to listen to their Minister. He did not appear, but sent the following note, which was read to the audience :—

Sunday Morning, January 9, 1859.

To the Congregation at the Music Hall : —

Well-beloved and Long-tried Friends :

I shall not speak to you to-day ; for this morning, a little after four o'clock, I had a slight attack of bleeding in the lungs or throat.

I intended to preach on "The Religion of Jesus and the Christianity of the Church, or the Superiority of Good Will to Man over Theological Fancies."

I hope you will not forget the contribution for the Poor, whom we have with us always. I don't know when I shall again look upon your welcome faces, which have so often cheered my spirit when my flesh was weak.

May we do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God, and his blessing will be upon us here and hereafter, for his Infinite Love is with us for ever and ever.

Faithfully your friend,

THEODORE PARKER.

The sensation of grief excited by the reading of this note was general and profound. Very many eyes were dimmed with tears, for although the withdrawal of Mr. Parker from his public ministrations had not been altogether unanticipated by those who had been aware of his feeble state of health for some time previous, yet it had been hoped that no trouble so serious as that announced in the note would arise.

After the reading of the note, a meeting of the parish was held, at which, after remarks by several gentlemen, it was voted to continue the salary of Mr. Parker for one year, at least, with the understanding that he would take a respite from all public duties for that period, or longer. A vote expressive of the deep and heart-felt sympathy of the Society with their Minister was also unanimously passed.

Mr. Parker was advised by his physicians to leave as soon as possible for the West Indies; and accordingly, after arranging his affairs as if he were not to return again, he left Boston for Santa Cruz on the 3d of February. Previous to his departure he wrote a brief Farewell Letter to his Congregation, on the 27th of January, which was published at the end of the New Year's Sermon, and is now reprinted here.

Meanwhile, the Letter from the Congregation to their Minister, bearing the date of January 11th, was prepared, and read at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Society and many others of Mr. Parker's friends, held on that day, and at that time and within a few days subsequent, was signed by about three hundred members of the Society. This number of signatures might easily have been increased tenfold had it been generally known that such a letter had been written; but owing to the critical condition of Mr. Parker's health, it was deemed advisable to use special precaution to keep it from his knowledge, and therefore no public notice of the letter was given, and the signatures attached to it were privately obtained from such persons as were most easily accessible. For the same reason it was not considered prudent to apprise Mr. Parker of the letter previous to his leaving Boston, and it was not until the 6th of March that he received it, at Santa Cruz

The whole correspondence is now published for the Members of the Society, and all others whom it may interest.

Boston, June 10th, 1859.

FAREWELL LETTER,

To the Members of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society in Boston.

Much valued Friends:—

When I first found myself unable to speak to you again, and medical men bade me be silent, and flee off for my life to a more genial clime, I determined, before I went, to make ready and publish my New Year's Sermon, the last I ever preached; and the one which was to follow it, the last I ever wrote, lying there yet unspoken; and also to prepare a letter to you, reviewing our past intercourse of now nearly fifteen years.

The phonographer's swift pen made the first work easy, and the last sermon lies printed before you: the next I soon laid aside, reserving my forces for the last. But alas! the Thought, and still more the Emotion, requisite for such a Letter, under such circumstances, are quite too much for me now. So,

with much regret, I find myself compelled by necessity to forego the attempt: nay, rather, I trust, only to *postpone* it for a few weeks.

Now, I can but write this note in parting, to thank you for the patience with which you have heard me so long; for the open-handed generosity which has provided for my unexpected needs; for the continued affection which so many of you have always shown me, and now more tenderly than ever; and yet, above all, for the joy it has given me to see the great Ideas and Emotions of True Religion spring up in your fields with such signs of promise. If my labors were to end to-day, I should still say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," for I think few men have seen larger results follow such labors, and so brief. But I shall not think our connection is ended, or likely soon to be: I hope yet to look in your eyes again, and speak to your hearts. So far as my recovery depends on me, be assured, dear friends, I shall leave nothing undone to effect it; and, so far as it is beyond human control, certainly you and I can trust the Infinite Parent of us all, without whose beneficent Providence not even a sparrow falls to the ground; living here or in Heaven, we are all equally the children of that unbounded Love.

It has given me great pain that I could not be with such of you as have lately suffered bereave-

ments and other affliction, and at least speak words of endearment and sympathy when words of consolation would not suffice.

I know not how long we shall be separated, but, while thankful for our past relations, I shall still fervently pray for your Welfare and Progress in True Religion, both as a Society, and as individual men and women. I know you will still think only too kindly of

Your Minister and Friend,

THEODORE PARKER.

Exeter Place, 27th January, 1859.

LETTER TO MR. PARKER.

THE MEMBERS OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY OF BOSTON TO THEIR BELOVED MINISTER:

DEAR SIR:—

It is now many years since you came, at the request of some of us, to preach in this city. A few men and women, acting under the impulse of a deep religious need, which the churches of Boston at that time failed to satisfy, sought to establish a pulpit which should teach a higher idea of religion than yet prevailed, and wherein the largest freedom of thought and speech should be allowed and respected. They asked you to come and stand in such a pulpit, thinking that you would meet their demand, and resolving that you should "have a chance to be heard in Boston"—a chance which other men were not willing to allow. At their earnest solicitation you

came, and the result has shown that they were not mistaken in their choice.

On the formal organization of this Society, when you were installed as its Minister, on the 4th of January, 1846, you preached a sermon of "The True Idea of a Christian Church." How well and faithfully you have labored from that time till now to make that idea a fact, and to build up such a church, we all know. From Sunday to Sunday, year after year,—with rare exceptions, when other duties or necessities compelled your absence,—you have been at your post, and have always discharged the great functions of your office in a manner which has left nothing to be desired on our part,—avoiding no responsibility, neglecting no trust, leaving no duty undone, but working with an ability, energy, perseverance, and self-sacrifice, of which it is not, perhaps, becoming in us to speak at length in this place, but which we cannot the less admire and approve. Outside of the pulpit, we have always found you equally faithful to your responsibilities and duties in all the various relations of life.

Nor have your labors and your example been in vain. You have taught us to discern between the traditions of men and the living realities of religion; you have brought home to our consciousness great truths, of the intellect, the conscience, the heart and the soul; you have shown us the Infinite Perfection of

God, and the greatness of Human Nature, inspired us with a higher reverence for Him, a deeper trust in his universal providence, with a larger faith also in Man and his capabilities. You have encouraged us to oppose all manner of wickedness and oppression, to welcome every virtue and humanity, to engage in all good works and noble reforms. From the experience of mankind, of nations, and of individuals, you have drawn great lessons of truth and wisdom for our warning or guidance. Above all, your own noble and manly and Christian life has been to us a perpetual Sermon, fuller of wisdom and beauty, more eloquent and instructive, even, than the lessons which have fallen from your lips.

In all our intercourse with you, you have ever been to us as a teacher, a friend, and brother, and have never assumed to be our master. You have respected and encouraged in us that free individuality of thought in matters of religion, and all other matters, which you have claimed for yourself; you have never imposed on us your opinions, asking us to accept them because they were yours, but you have always warned us to use a wise discretion and decide according to our own judgment and conscience, not according to yours. You have not sought to build up a sect, but a free Christian community.

You have indeed been a minister to us, and we

feel that your ministry has been for our good; that through it we are better prepared to successfully resist those temptations and to overcome those evils by which we are surrounded in life, to discharge those obligations which devolve upon us as men aiming to be Christians, and to acquit ourselves as we ought.

As we have gathered together from Sunday to Sunday, as we have looked into your face, and your words have touched our sympathies and stirred within us our deepest and best emotions, as we have come to know you better year by year, and to appreciate more fully the service which you have been doing for us and for other men, and the faithfulness with which you have labored in it, we have felt that ours was indeed a blessed privilege; and we have indulged a hope that our lives might testify to the good influence of your teachings—a hope which we humbly trust has to some extent, at least, been realized. If we have failed to approximate that high ideal of excellence which you have always set before us, the blame is our own, and not yours.

The world has called us hard names, but it is on you that have fallen the hatred, the intolerance, the insults and the calumnies of men calling themselves Christian. Alas! that they should be so wanting in the first principles of that religion which Christ taught and lived, and which they pretend to honor

and uphold. Of those who have opposed us, many have done so through ignorance, misled by the false representations of others; some from conscientious motives; others from selfishness in many forms. Time has already done much to correct this evil with many; it will do more to correct it with others. While the little we may have sacrificed on our part has been as nothing in comparison with all we have gained, from our connection with you, as members of this society, on yours the sacrifice has been great indeed—not, however, without its recompense to you also, we hope and trust.

For all that you have been to us, for all that you have done, and borne, and forborne, in our behalf, we thank you kindly, cordially, and affectionately. We feel that we owe you such gratitude as no words of ours can express. If we have not shown it in the past by conforming our lives to that high standard of morality and piety which you have exemplified in your own, let us at least try to do so in the future.

We cannot but feel a just pride in the success of this church; that, in spite of all obstacles, it has strengthened and increased from year to year, and that the circle of its influence has continually widened. Thousands of earnest men and women in this and other lands, who do not gather with us from week to week, look to this church as their

"city of refuge;" their sympathies, their convictions, and their hopes coincide with our own; they are of us, though not with us. Most of them have never listened to your voice, nor looked upon your face, but the noble words which you have uttered are dear to their hearts, and they also bless God for the service which you have done for them.

In all your labors for us and for others, we have only one thing to regret, and that is, that you have not spared yourself, but have sacrificed your health and strength to an extent which, of late, has excited our deepest solicitude and apprehension. We thank God that he furnished you with a vigorous constitution, which has stood the test of so many years of incessant and unwearied toil, in so many departments of usefulness, and which has enabled you to accomplish so much as you have already done; but there is a limit to the endurance of even the strongest man, and the frequent warnings which you have received within the past year or two would seem to indicate that Nature will not suffer even the best of her children to transgress the great laws which she has established for their observance, without inflicting the penalty of disobedience, even though they are engaged in the highest and holiest service which man can render unto man. We would not presume to instruct you

in this matter; we only repeat what you have yourself often taught us.

A warning now comes of so imperative a nature that it cannot be disregarded.

We need not assure you that the note from you which was read at the Music Hall on Sunday morning last, was listened to by us with the most sincere and heartfelt sorrow — sorrow, however, not unmingled with hope. While we feel the deepest and warmest sympathy for you under the new and serious development of the disease from which you are suffering, we yet trust that it is not too late to arrest its progress, and that, in some more genial clime than ours, relieved from the cares and responsibilities which have borne heavily upon you for so many years, you may regain that soundness of health which shall enable you to resume, at some future day, the great work to which you have devoted your life.

We know with how much reluctance it is that you feel compelled to suspend your labors among us at this time; but there is the less cause for regret on your part, inasmuch as you have, by the services you have already rendered to mankind, far more than earned the right to do so, even if the necessity did not exist.

Whether it is for a longer or a shorter period that you will be separated from us, of course none of us

can tell. In any event, God's will be done! and at all times, wherever you may be, you will have our deepest veneration and regard.

Waiting for that happier day when we shall again take you by the hand, and again listen to your welcome voice, we remain

Your faithful and loving friends,

(In behalf of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society),

SAMUEL MAY,
MARY MAY,
THOMAS GODDARD,
FRANCIS JACKSON,
JOHN FLINT,
WILLIAM DALL,
JOHN R. MANLEY,

And three hundred others.

Boston, January 11, 1859.

REPLY OF MR. PARKER.

FREDERICKSTED, SANTA CRUZ, 9th May, 1859.

To Samuel May, Mary May, Thomas Goddard, Francis Jackson, John Flint, William Dall, John R. Manley, and the other signers of a Letter to me, dated Boston, January 11th, 1859:—

DEAR FRIENDS:—Your genial and most welcome Letter was handed to me at this place the 6th of March; I had not strength before to bear the excitement it must occasion. It was Sunday Morning; and while you were at the Music Hall, I read it in this little far-off Island, with emotions you may imagine easier than I can relate. It brought back the times of trial we have had together, and your many kindnesses to me. I can easily bear to be opposed, and that with the greatest amount of abuse; for habit makes all things familiar. I fear it flatters my pride a little, to be greatly underrated; but to be appreciated so tenderly by your affection, and rated so

much above my own deservings, it makes me ashamed that I am no more worthy of your esteem and praise:

> "I 've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
> With coldness still returning:
> Alas! *the Gratitude of men*
> *Hath oftener left me mourning!*"

Herewith I send you, and all the Members of the Society, a long Letter, reviewing my life, and especially my connection with you. I began to compose it before I knew of your Letter to me, before I left Boston, indeed, in sleepless nights; but wrote nothing till I was fixed in this place, and then only little by little, as I had strength for the work. I finished it April 19th, and so date it that day. The fair copy sent you is made by my wife and Miss Stevenson, and of course was finished much later. I have had no safe opportunity of sending it direct to you till now, when Miss Thacher, one of our townswomen, returning hence to Boston, kindly offers to take charge of it. If this copy do not reach you, I shall forward another from Europe.

The Letter would have been quite different, no doubt, in plan and execution, — better, I hope, in thought and language, had I been sound and well; for all a sick man's work seems likely to be infected with his illness. I beg you to forgive its imperfections, and be as gentle in your judgment as fairness will allow.

Though I have been reasonably industrious all my life, when I come to look over what I have actually done, it seems very little in comparison with the opportunities I have had; only the beginning of what I intended to accomplish. But it is idle to make excuses now, and not profitable to complain.

As that Letter is intended for all the Members of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society, I beg you to transmit it to the Standing Committee, — I know not their names, — who will lay it before them in some suitable manner.

With thanks for the past, and hearty good wishes for your future welfare, believe me

Faithfully your Minister and Friend,

THEODORE PARKER.

Fredericksted, Santa Cruz, 9th May, 1859.

To the Standing Committee of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society in Boston.

Gentlemen and Ladies:—Here is a Letter addressed to the Members of your Society. I beg you to lay it before them in such a manner as you may see most fit. Believe me

Faithfully your Minister and Friend,

THEODORE PARKER.

THEODORE PARKER'S

EXPERIENCE AS A MINISTER.

LETTER.

To the Members of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society of Boston.

My dear and valued Friends:—After it became needful that I should be silent, and flee off from my home, I determined, at least, before I went, to write you a letter, touching our long connection, and my efforts in your service, and so bid you farewell. But the experienced doctors and other wise friends forbid the undertaking, and directed me to wait for a more favorable time, when the work might be more leisurely and better done, with less risk also to my life; promising indeed a time when it would not diminish the chances of recovery. In the twenty-four days which came between the sudden, decisive attack, and my departure from Boston, there was little time for even a sound, well man to arrange and settle his worldly affairs, to straighten out complicated matters, and return thanks to the many that have befriended him in the difficult emergencies of life,—for surely I left home as one not to set eyes on New England again. Since then there has been no time till now when I have had strength to endure the intellectual

labor, and still more the emotional agitation, which must attend such a review of my past life. Consumption, having long since slain almost all my near kinsfolk, horsed on the North-wind, rode at me also, seeking my life. Swiftly I fled hither, hoping in this little quiet and fair-skied Island of the Holy Cross to hide me from his monstrous sight, to pull his arrows from my flesh, and heal my wounded side. It is yet too soon to conjecture how or when my exile shall end; but at home, wise, friendly and hopeful doctors told me I had "but one chance in ten" for complete recovery, though more for a partial restoration to some small show of health, I suppose, and power of moderate work. But if the danger be as they say, I do not despair nor lose heart at such odds, having often in my life contended against much greater, and come off triumphant, though the chances against me were a hundred or a thousand to one. Besides, this is now the third time that I remember friends and doctors despairing of my life. Still, I know that I am no longer young, and that I stand up to my shoulders in my grave, whose uncertain sides at any moment may cave in and bury me with their resistless weight. Yet I hope to climb out this side, and live and work again amid laborious New England men; for, though the flesh be weak and the spirit resigned to either fate, yet still the Will to live, though reverent and submissive, is exceeding strong, more vehement than

ever before, as I have still much to do — some things to begin upon, and many more lying now half done, that I alone can finish — and I should not like to suffer the little I have done to perish now for lack of a few years' work.

I know well both the despondency of sick men that makes the night seem darker than it is, and also the pleasing illusion which flits before consumptive patients, and while this Will-o'-the-wisp comes flickering from their kindred's grave, they think it is the breaking of a new and more auspicious day. So indeed it is, the Day-spring from on high, revealing the white, tall porches of Eternity. Let you and me be neither cheated by delusive hopes, nor weakened by unmanly fears, but, looking the facts fairly in the face, let us meet the Inevitable with calmness and pious joy, singing the wealthy Psalm of Life:

"Give to the winds thy fears;
Hope and be undismayed!
God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head!
Tho' comprehended not,
Yet Earth and Heaven tell,
He sits a Father on the throne:
God guideth all things well!"

But while my strength is but weakness, and my time for this Letter so uncertain, I will waste neither in a lengthened introduction, knowing "it were a foolish thing to make a long prologue and be short in the story itself."

In this Letter I must needs speak much of myself, and tell some things which seem to belong only to my private history; for without a knowledge of them, my public conduct might appear other than it really is. Yet I would gladly defer them to a more fitting place, in some brief autobiography to be published after my death; but I am not certain of time to prepare that, so shall here, in small compass, briefly sketch out some small personal particulars, which might elsewhere be presented in their full proportions, and with appropriate light and shade. As this Letter is confidential and addressed only to YOU, I could wish it might be read only to the Members of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society, or printed solely for their affection, not also published for the eye of the world; but that were impossible, for what is offered to the hearts of so many, thereby becomes accessible to the eyes and ears of all who wish to see and hear; so what I write private to you, becomes public also for mankind, whether I will or not.

In my early boyhood I *felt* I was to be a minister, and looked forward with eager longings for the work to which I still think my nature itself an "effectual call," certainly a deep one, and a continuous. Few men have ever been more fortunate than I in having

pains judiciously taken with their intellectual culture.

My early education was not costly, as men count expense by dollars; it was exceeding precious, as they might reckon outlay by the fitness of the process to secure a development of natural powers. By father and mother, yes, even by brothers and sisters, great and unceasing care was taken to secure power of Observation, that the senses might grasp their natural objects; of voluntary Attention, fixed, continuous and exact, which, despite of appearances, sees the fact just as it is, no more, no less; of Memory, that holds all things firm as gravitation, and yet, like that, keeps them unmixed, not confusing the most delicate outline, and reproduces them at will, complete in the whole, and perfect in each part; much stress also was laid on Judgment and inventive Imagination. It was a great game they set me to play; it was also an advantage that the counters cost little money, but were common things, picked up daily on a farm, in a kitchen, or a mechanic's thoughtful shop. But still more pains were taken with my moral and religious culture. In my earliest boyhood I was taught to respect the instinctive promptings of Conscience, regarding it as the "Voice of God in the Soul of Man," which must always be obeyed; to speak the Truth without evasion or concealment; to love Justice and conform to it; to reverence Merit in all men, and that regard-

less of their rank or reputation; and, above all things, I was taught to love and trust the dear God. He was not presented to me as a great King, with Force for his chief quality, but rather as a Father, eminent for perfect Justice, and complete and perfect Love, alike the parent of Jew and Gentile, Christian and non-Christian, dealing with all, not according to the accident of their name and situation, but to the real use each should make of his talents and opportunities, however little or great. I was taught Self-reliance, intellectual, moral, and of many another form; to investigate all things with my own eyes; carefully to form opinions for myself, and while I believed them reasonable and just, to hold and defend them with modest firmness. Inquiry was encouraged in all directions.

Of course, I took in many of the absurd theological opinions of the time; but I think few New Englanders born of religious families in the first ten years of this century, were formally taught so little Superstition. I have met none with whom more judicious attempts were made to produce a natural unfolding of the religious and moral faculties; I do not speak of results, only of aim and process. I have often been praised for virtues which really belonged to my father and mother, and if they were also mine, they must have come so easy under such training, that I should feel entitled to but small merit for possessing them. They made a careful distinction between a man's character

and his creed, and in my hearing never spoke a bigoted or irreverent word.

As my relatives and neighbors were all hard-working people, living in one of the most laborious communities in the world, I did not fail to learn the great lesson of personal industry, and to acquire power of Work — to begin early, to continue long, with strong and rapid stroke. The discipline and habit of bodily toil were quite easily transferred to Thought, and I learned early to apply my mind with exact, active and long-continued attention, which outward things did not disturb; so, while working skilfully with my hands, I could yet think on what I would.

Good books by great masters fell into even my boyish hands; the best English authors of prose and verse, the Bible, the Greek and Roman classics — which I at first read mainly in translations, but soon became familiar with in their original beauty — these were my literary helps. What was read at all, was also studied, and not laid aside till well understood. If my books in boyhood were not many, they were much, and also great.

I had an original fondness for scientific and metaphysical Thought, which found happy encouragement in my early days; my father's strong, discriminating and comprehensive mind also inclining that way, offered me an excellent help. Nature was all about me; my attention was wisely directed to both Use

and Beauty, and I early became familiar with the Flora of New England, and attentive also to the habits of beast and bird, insect, reptile, fish. A few scientific works on Natural History gave me their stimulus and their help.

After my general preliminary education was pretty well advanced, the hour came when I must decide on my profession for life. All about me there were ministers who had sufficient talents; now and then one admirably endowed with learning; devout and humane men, also, with no stain on their personal character. But I did not see much in the clerical profession to attract me thither; the notorious dulness of the Sunday services, their mechanical character, the poverty and insignificance of the sermons, the unnaturalness and uncertainty of the doctrines preached on the authority of a "divine and infallible revelation," the lifelessness of the public prayers, and the consequent heedlessness of the congregation, all tended to turn a young man off from becoming a minister. Besides, it did not appear that the New England clergy were leaders in the intellectual, moral or religious progress of the people; if they tried to seem so, it was only the appearance which was kept up. "Do you think our minister would dare tell his audience of their actual faults?" — so a rough blacksmith once asked me in my youth. "Certainly I do!" was the boyish answer. "Humph!" rejoined the smith, "I

should like to have him begin, then!" The genius of Emerson soon moved from the clerical constellation and stood forth alone, a fixed and solitary star. Dr. Channing was the only man in the New England pulpit who to me seemed great. All my friends advised me against the ministry — it was "a narrow place, affording no opportunity to do much!" I thought it a wide place.

The legal profession seemed to have many attractions. There were eminent men in its ranks, rising to public honors, judicial or political; they seemed to have more freedom and individuality than the ministers. For some time I hesitated, inclined that way, and made preliminary studies in the Law. But at length the perils of that profession seemed greater than I cared to rush upon. Mistaking sound for sense, I thought the lawyers' moral tone was lower than the ministers', and dared not put myself under that temptation I prayed God not to lead me into. I could not make up my mind to defend a cause I knew to be wrong, using all my efforts to lead judge or jury to a decision I thought unjust. A powerful and successful practitioner told me "none could be a lawyer without doing so," and quoted the well-known words of Lord Brougham. I saw men of large talents yielding to this temptation, and counting as great success what to me even then seemed only great ruin. I could not decide to set up a Law-mill beside the public road, to

put my hand on the winch, and, by turning one way, rob innocent men of their property, liberty, life; or, by reversing the motion, withdraw the guilty from just punishment, pecuniary or corporeal. Though I hesitated some time, soon as I got clearness of sight, I returned to my first love, for that seemed free from guile. I then asked myself these three questions:

1. "Can you seek for what is Eternally True, and not be blinded by the opinions of any sect, or of the Christian Church; and can you tell that Truth you learn, even when it is unpopular and hated?" I answered, "I CAN!" Rash youth is ever confident.

2. "Can you seek the Eternal Right, and not be blinded by the statutes and customs of men, ecclesiastical, political and social; and can you declare that Eternal Right you discover, applying it to the actual life of man, individual and associated, though it bring you into painful relations with men?" Again, I swiftly answered, "I CAN!"

3. "Can you represent in your life that Truth of the intellect and that Right of the conscience, and so not disgrace with your character what you preach with your lips?" I doubted of this more than the others; the temptation to personal wickedness seemed stronger than that to professional deceit — at least it was then better known; but I answered, "I CAN TRY, AND WILL!"

Alas! I little knew all that was involved in these

three questions, and their prompt, youthful answers. I understand it better now.

So I determined to become a minister, hoping to help mankind in the most important of all human concerns, the development of man's highest powers.

Zealously I entered on my Theological Education, with many ill-defined doubts, and some distinct denials, of the chief doctrines of the Ecclesiastical Theology of Christendom.

1. In my early childhood, after a severe but silent struggle, I made way with the ghastly doctrine of Eternal Damnation and a Wrathful God; this is the Goliath of that Theology. From my seventh year I have had no *Fear* of God, only an ever-greatening LOVE and TRUST.

2. The Doctrine of the Trinity, the "great mystery of Revelation," had long since gone the same road. For a year, though born and bred among Unitarians, I had attended the preachings of Dr. Lyman Beecher, the most powerful Orthodox minister in New England, then in the full blaze of his talents and reputation, and stirred also with polemic zeal against "Unitarians, Universalists, Papists, and Infidels." I went through one of his "protracted meetings," listening to the fiery words of excited men, and hearing the most frightful doctrines set forth in sermon, song, and prayer. I greatly

respected the talents, the zeal, and the enterprise of that able man, who certainly taught me much, but I came away with no confidence in his Theology; the better I understood it, the more self-contradictory, unnatural, and hateful did it seem. A year of his preaching about finished all my respect for the Calvinistic Scheme of Theology.

3. I had found no evidence which to me could authorize a belief in the supernatural birth of Jesus of Nazareth. The two-fold biblical testimony was all; that was contradictory and good for nothing; we had not the Affidavit of the Mother, the only competent human witness, nor even the Declaration of the Son; there was no circumstantial evidence to confirm the statement in the Gospels of a most improbable event.

4. Many miracles related in the Old and New Testament seemed incredible to me; some were clearly impossible, others ridiculous, and a few were wicked: such, of course, I rejected at once, while I still arbitrarily admitted others. The general Question of Miracles was one which gave me much uneasiness, for I had not learned carefully to examine evidence for alleged historical events, and had, besides, no clear conception of what is involved in the notion that God ever violates the else constant mode of operation of the Universe. Of course I had not then that philosophical idea of God which

makes a theological miracle as impossible as a round triangle, or any other self-evident contradiction.

5. I had no belief in the plenary, infallible, verbal inspiration of the whole Bible, and strong doubts as to the miraculous inspiration of any part of it. Some things were the opposite of divine; I could not put my finger on any great moral or religious truth taught by revelation in the New Testament, which had not previously been set forth by men for whom no miraculous help was ever claimed. But, on the whole matter of Inspiration, I lacked clear and definite ideas, and found neither friend nor book to help me.

In due time I entered the Theological School at Cambridge, then under the charge of the Unitarians, or "Liberal Christians." I found excellent opportunities for study: there were able and earnest professors, who laid no yoke on any neck, but left each man free to think for himself, and come to such conclusions as he must. Telling what they thought they knew, they never pretended they had learned all that may be known, or winnowed out all error from their creed. They were honest guides, with no more sophistry than is perhaps almost universal in that calling, and did not pretend to be masters. There, too, was a large library containing much valuable ancient lore, though, alas! almost none of

the new theologic thought of the German masters. Besides, there was leisure, and unbounded freedom of research; and I could work as many hours in the study as a mechanic in his shop, or a farmer in his field. The pulpits of Boston were within an easy walk, and Dr. Channing drew near the zenith of his power.

Here, under these influences, I pursued the usual routine of theological reading, but yet, of course, had my own private studies, suited to my special wants. It is now easy to tell what I then attempted without always being conscious of my aim, and what results I gradually reached before I settled in the ministry.

I. I studied the Bible with much care. First, I wished to learn, What is Bible—what books and words compose it? this is the question of Criticism; next, What does the Bible mean — what Sentiments and Ideas do its words contain? this is the question of Interpretation. I read the Bible critically, in its original tongues, the most important parts of it also in the early versions, and sought for the meaning early attributed to its words, and so studied the works of Jewish Rabbis on the Old Testament, and of the early Christian Fathers on both New and Old; besides, I studied carefully the latest critics and interpreters, especially the German.

I soon found that the Bible is a collection of quite heterogeneous books, most of them anonymous, or bearing names of doubtful authors, collected, none knows how, or when, or by whom; united more by caprice than any philosophic or historic method, so that it is not easy to see why one ancient book is kept in the Canon and another kept out. I found no Unity of Doctrine in the several parts; the Old Testament "reveals" one form of religion, and the New Testament one directly its opposite; and in the New Testament itself, I found each writer had his own individuality, which appears not only in the style, the form of thought, but quite as much in the doctrines, the substance of thought, where no two are well agreed.

Connected with this biblical study, came the question of Inspiration and of Miracles. I still inconsistently believed, or half believed, in the direct miraculous interposition of God, from time to time, to set things right which else went wrong, though I found no historic or philosophic reason for limiting it to the affairs of Jews and Christians, or the early ages of the Church. The whole matter of Miracles was still a puzzle to me, and for a long time a source of anxiety: for I had not studied the principles of historic evidence, nor learned to identify and scrutinize the witnesses. But the problem of Inspiration got sooner solved. I believed in the Immanence of God in man, as well as matter, his activity in both; hence, that all

men are inspired in proportion to their actual powers and their normal use thereof; that Truth is the test of intellectual inspiration, Justice of moral, and so on. I did not find the Bible inspired, except in this general way, and in proportion to the Truth and Justice therein. It seemed to me that no part of the Old Testament or New could be called the "Word of God," save in the sense that all Truth is God's word.

II. I studied the Historical Development of Religion and Theology amongst Jews and Christians, and saw the gradual formation of the great ecclesiastical doctrines which so domineered over the world. As I found the Bible was the work of men, so I also found that the Christian Church was no more divine than the British State, a Dutchman's Shop or an Austrian's Farm. The miraculous, infallible Bible, and the miraculous, infallible Church, disappeared when they were closely looked at; and I found the Fact of History quite different from the pretension of Theology.

III. I studied the Historical Development of Religion and Theology amongst the nations not Jewish or Christian, and attended as well as I then could to the four other great religious sects — the Brahmanic, the Buddhistic, the Classic and the Mohammedan. As far as possible at that time, I studied the Sacred Books of mankind in their original tongues, and with the help of the most faithful interpreters. Here the Greek and Roman poets and philosophers came in for

their place, there being no Sacred Books of the Classic nations. I attended pretty carefully to the religion of Savages and Barbarians, and was thereby helped to the solution of many a difficult problem. I found no tribe of men destitute of religion who had attained power of articulate speech.

IV. I studied assiduously the Metaphysics and Psychology of Religion. Religious consciousness was universal in human history. Was it then natural to man, inseparable from his essence, and so from his development? In my own consciousness I found it automatic and indispensable; was it really so likewise in the Human Race? The authority of Bibles and Churches was no answer to that question. I tried to make an analysis of Humanity, and see if by psychologic science I could detect the special element which produced religious consciousness in me, and religious phenomena in mankind, — seeking a cause adequate to the facts of experience and observation. The common books of philosophy seemed quite insufficient; the Sensational System, so ably presented by Locke in his masterly Essay, developed into various forms by Hobbes, Berkely, Hume, Paley and the French Materialists, and modified, but not much mended, by Reid and Stewart, gave little help; it could not legitimate my own religious instincts, nor explain the religious history of mankind, or even of the British people, to whom that philosophy is still so

manifold a hindrance. Ecclesiastical writers, though able as Clarke and Butler, and learned also as Cudworth and Barrow, could not solve the difficulty; for the Principle of Authority, though more or less concealed, yet lay there, and, like buried iron, disturbed the free action of their magnetic genius, affecting its dip and inclination. The brilliant Mosaic, which Cousin set before the world, was of great service, but not satisfactory. I found most help in the works of Immanuel Kant, one of the profoundest thinkers in the world, though one of the worst writers, even of Germany; if he did not always furnish conclusions I could rest in, he yet gave me the true method, and put me on the right road.

I found certain great primal Intuitions of Human Nature, which depend on no logical process of demonstration, but are rather facts of consciousness given by the instinctive action of human nature itself. I will mention only the three most important which pertain to Religion.

1. The Instinctive Intuition of the Divine, the consciousness that there is a God.

2. The Instinctive Intuition of the Just and Right, a consciousness that there is a Moral Law, independent of our will, which we ought to keep.

3. The Instinctive Intuition of the Immortal, a consciousness that the Essential Element of man, the principle of Individuality, never dies.

Here, then, was the foundation of Religion, laid in human nature itself, which neither the atheist nor the more pernicious bigot, with their sophisms of denial or affirmation, could move, or even shake. I had gone through the great spiritual trial of my life, telling no one of its hopes or fears, and I thought it a triumph that I had psychologically established these three things to my own satisfaction, and devised a scheme which to the scholar's mind, I thought, could legitimate what was spontaneously given to all, by the great primal Instincts of Mankind.

Then I proceeded to develop the contents of these instinctive intuitions of the Divine, the Just and the Immortal, and see what God actually is, what Morality is, and what Eternal Life has to offer. In each case I pursued two methods—the inductive and deductive.

First, from the History of Mankind—savage, barbarous, civilized, enlightened—I gathered the most significant facts I could find relating to men's opinions about God, Morality, Heaven and Hell, and thence made such generalizations as the facts would warrant, which, however, were seldom satisfactory; for they did not represent Facts of the Universe, the actual God, Justice and Eternal Life, but only what men had thought or felt thereof; yet this Comparative and Inductive Theology was of great value to me.

Next, from the primitive Facts of Consciousness, given by the power of instinctive intuition, I endeav-

ored to deduce the true notion of God, of Justice and Futurity. Here I could draw from Human Nature, and not be hindered by the limitations of Human History; but I know now better than it was possible then, how difficult is this work, and how often the inquirer mistakes his own subjective imagination for a fact of the universe. It is for others to decide whether I have sometimes mistaken a little grain of brilliant dust in my telescope for a fixed star in Heaven.

To learn what I could about the spiritual faculties of man, I not only studied the Sacred Books of various nations, the poets and the philosophers who professedly treat thereof, but also such as deal with sleep-walking, dreams, visions, prophecies, second-sight, oracles, ecstasies, witchcraft, magic, wonders, the appearance of devils, ghosts, and the like. Besides, I studied other works which lie out from the regular highway of theology, the spurious books attributed to famous Jews or Christians, the Pseudepigraphy of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha of the New, with the strange fantasies of the Neoplatonists and Gnostics. I did not neglect the writings of the Mystics, though at that time I could only make a beginning with the more famous or most tenderly religious; I was much attracted to this class of men, who developed the element of Piety, regardless of the theologic ritualism of the Church, the philosophic discipline of

the Schools, or the practical morality of common life. By this process, I not only learned much of the abnormal action of the human spirit, and saw how often a mere fancy passes for fact, and a dreamer's subjective whim bestrides some great harbor of the world for a thousand years, obstructing all tall ships, until an earthquake throws it down; but I also gleaned up many a precious flower which bloomed unseen in those waste places of literature, and was unknown to the authorized floras of the School or Church.

I left the Theological School with reluctance, conscious of knowing so little of what I must presently teach, and wishing more years for research and thought. Of course my first sermons were only imitations; and, even if the thought might, perhaps, be original, the form was old, the stereotype of the pulpit. I preached with fear and trembling, and wondered that old and mature persons, rich in the experience of life, should listen to a young man, who might, indeed, have read and thought, but yet had had no time to live much and know things by heart. I took all possible pains with the matter of the discourse, and always appealed to the religious instinct in mankind. At the beginning I resolved to preach the Natural Laws of man as they are writ in his constitution, no less and no more. After preaching a few months in various places, and feeling my way into the conscious-

ness of men, I determined to preach nothing as Religion which I had not experienced inwardly, and made my own, knowing it by heart. Thus, not only the intellectual, but also the religious part of my sermons would rest on facts that I was sure of, and not on the words of another. I was indebted to another young candidate for the hint. I hope I have not been faithless to the early vow. A study of the English State Trials, and a careful analysis of the arguments of the great speeches therein, helped me to clearness of arrangement, and distinctness in the use of terms. Here and in the Greek and Latin orations I got the best part of my rhetorical culture.

On the longest day of 1837, I was ordained minister of the Unitarian Church and Congregation at West Roxbury, a little village near Boston, one of the smallest societies in New England, where I found men and women whose friendship is still dear and instructive. I had thought freely, and freely preached what I thought; none had ever questioned my right. At the Theological School, the professors were then teachers to instruct, not also inquisitors to torture and to damn; satisfied of the religious character of the pupils, they left each to develop his own free spiritual individuality, responsible only to his own Conscience and his God. It was then the boast of the little Uni-

tarian party, that it respected individuality, freedom of thought and freedom of speech, and had neither Inquisitors nor Pope. Great diversity of opinion prevailed amongst Unitarians, ministers and laymen, but the Unity of Religion was more thought of than the Variety of Theology. At ordinations, for some years, their Councils had ceased to inquire into the special opinions of the candidate, leaving him and the Society electing to settle the matter. The first principle of Congregationalism certainly requires this course. As a sect, the Unitarians had but one distinctive doctrine —the Unity of God without the Trinity of Persons. Christendom said, "Jesus of Nazareth is Jehovah of Hosts!" The Unitarians answered, "He is not!" At my ordination, none of the Council offered to catechize me, or wished to interfere with what belonged to me and the Congregation, and that probably thought of my Piety and Morality more than of the special Theology which even then rode therewith in the same panniers. The able and earnest ministers who preached the Sermon, delivered the Charge, and gave me the Right-hand of Fellowship, all recommended study, investigation, originality, freedom of thought and openness of speech, as well as humanity, and a life of personal religiousness. One, in his ordaining prayer, his hand on my head, put up the petition, "that no fondness for literature or science, and no favorite studies may ever lead this young man from learning

the true religion, and preaching it for the salvation of mankind!" Most heartily did I say "Amen!" to this supplication.

For the first year or two the congregation did not exceed seventy persons, including the children. I soon became well acquainted with all in the little parish, where I found some men of rare enlightenment, some truly generous and noble souls. I knew the characters of all, and the thoughts of such as had them. I took great pains with the composition of my sermons; they were never out of my mind. I had an intense delight in writing and preaching; but I was a learner quite as much as a teacher, and was feeling my way forward and upward with one hand, while I tried to lead men with the other. I preached Natural Laws, nothing on the authority of any church, any tradition, any sect, though I sought illustration and confirmation from all these sources. For historical things, I told the historical evidence; for spiritual things, I found ready proof in the primal instincts of the Soul, and confirmation in the life of religious men. The simple life of the farmers, mechanics and milkmen about me, of its own accord, turned into a sort of poetry, and re-appeared in the sermons, as the green woods, not far off, looked in at the windows of the Meeting House. I think I preached only what I had experienced in my own inward consciousness, which widened and grew richer as I came into prac-

tical contact with living men, turned time into life, and mere thought became character.

But I had much leisure for my private humanitarian and philosophic studies. One of the Professors in the Theological School had advised against my settling "in so small a place," and warned me against "the seductions of an easy chair," telling me I must become a "minister at large for all mankind," and do with the pen what I could not with the voice. I devoted my spare time to hard study. To work ten or fifteen hours a day in my literary labors, was not only a habit, but a pleasure; with zeal and delight I applied myself anew to the great theological problems of the age.

Many circumstances favored both studious pursuits and the formation of an independent character. The years of my preliminary theological study, and of my early ministry, fell in the most interesting period of New England's spiritual history, when a great revolution went on,—so silent that few men knew it was taking place, and none then understood its whither or its whence.

The Unitarians, after a long and bitter controversy, in which they were often shamelessly ill-treated by the "Orthodox," had conquered, and secured their ecclesiastical right to deny the Trinity, "the Achilles of dogmas;" they had won the respect of the New England public; had absorbed most of the religious

talent of Massachusetts, founded many churches, and possessed and liberally administered the oldest and richest College in America. Not yet petrified into a sect, they rejoiced in the large liberty of "the children of God," and, owning neither racks nor dungeons, did not covet any of those things that were their neighbors'. With less education and literary skill, the Universalists had fought manfully against Eternal Damnation — the foulest doctrine which defiles the pages of man's theologic history,—secured their ecclesiastical position, wiping malignant statutes from the Law Books, and, though in a poor and vulgar way, were popularizing the great truth that God's chief attribute is LOVE, which is extended to all men. Alone of all Christian sects, they professedly taught the Immortality of man in such a form that it is no curse to the race to find it true! But, though departing from those doctrines which are essential to the Christian ecclesiastic scheme, neither Universalist nor Unitarian had broken with the authority of Revelation, the word of the Bible, but still professed a willingness to believe both Trinity and Damnation, could they be found in the miraculous and infallible Scripture.

Mr. Garrison, with his friends, inheriting what was best in the Puritan founders of New England, fired with the zeal of the Hebrew Prophets and Christian Martyrs, while they were animated with a Spirit of Humanity rarely found in any of the three, was begin-

ning his noble work, but in a style so humble that, after much search, the police of Boston discovered there was nothing dangerous in it, for "his only visible auxiliary was a negro boy." Dr. Channing was in the full maturity of his powers, and, after long preaching the Dignity of Man as an abstraction, and Piety as a purely inward life, with rare and winsome eloquence, and ever progressive humanity, began to apply his sublime doctrines to actual life in the Individual, the State, and the Church. In the name of Christianity, the great American Unitarian called for the reform of the drunkard, the elevation of the poor, the instruction of the ignorant, and, above all, for the liberation of the American slave. A remarkable man, his instinct of progress grew stronger the more he travelled, and the further he went, for he surrounded himself with young life. Horace Mann, with his co-adjutors, began a great movement, to improve the public education of the people. Pierpont, single-handed, was fighting a grand and twofold battle—against drunkenness in the street, and for righteousness in the pulpit—against fearful ecclesiastic odds, maintaining a minister's right and duty to oppose actual wickedness, however popular and destructive. The brilliant genius of Emerson rose in the winter nights, and hung over Boston, drawing the eyes of ingenuous young people to look up to that great, new star, a beauty and a mystery, which charmed for the

moment, while it gave also perennial inspiration, as it led them forward along new paths, and toward new hopes. America had seen no such sight before; it is not less a blessed wonder now.

Besides, the Phrenologists, so ably represented by Spurzheim and Combe, were weakening the power of the old Supernaturalism, leading men to study the Constitution of Man more wisely than before, and laying the foundation on which many a beneficent structure was soon to rise. The writings of Wordsworth were becoming familiar to the thoughtful lovers of nature and of man, and drawing men to natural piety. Carlyle's works got reprinted at Boston, diffusing a strong, and then, also, a healthy influence on old and young. The writings of Coleridge were reprinted in America, all of them "Aids to Reflection," and brilliant with the scattered sparks of genius; they incited many to think, more especially young Trinitarian ministers; and, spite of the lack of both historic and philosophic accuracy, and the utter absence of all proportion in his writings; spite of his haste, his vanity, prejudice, sophistry, confusion, and opium —he yet did great service in New England, helping emancipate enthralled minds. The works of Cousin, more systematic, and more profound as a whole, and far more catholic and comprehensive, continental, not insular, in his range, also became familiar to Americans, —reviews and translations going where the eloquent

original was not heard—and helped free the young mind from the gross Sensationalism of the academic Philosophy on one side, and the grosser Supernaturalism of the ecclesiastic Theology on the other.

The German language, hitherto the priceless treasure of a few, was becoming well known, and many were thereby made acquainted with the most original, deep, bold, comprehensive and wealthy literature in the world, full of theologic and philosophic thought. Thus, a great storehouse was opened to such as were earnestly in quest of Truth. Young Mr. Strauss, in whom genius for criticism was united with extraordinary learning and rare facility of philosophic speech, wrote his "Life of Jesus," where he rigidly scrutinized the Genuineness of the Gospels and the Authenticity of their contents, and, with scientific calmness, brought every statement to his steady scales, weighing it, not always justly, as I think, but impartially always, with philosophic coolness and deliberation. The most formidable assailant of the ecclesiastical theology of Christendom, he roused a host of foes whose writings—mainly ill-tempered, insolent and sophistical—it was yet profitable for a young man to read.

The value of Christian miracles, not the question of fact, was discussed at Boston, as never before in America. Prophecy had been thought the Jachin, and Miracles the Boaz, whereon alone Christianity

could rest; but, said some, if both be shaken down, the Lord's house will not fall! The claims of ecclesiastical tradition came up to be settled anew; and young men, walking solitary through the moonlight, asked, "Which is to be permanent master—a single Accident in Human History, nay, perchance only the Whim of some anonymous dreamer, or the Substance of Human Nature, greatening with continual development, and

'Not without access of unexpected strength?'"

The question was also its answer.

The Rights of Labor were discussed with deep philanthropic feeling, and sometimes with profound thought, metaphysic and economic both. The works of Charles Fourier—a strange, fantastic, visionary man, no doubt, but gifted also with amazing insight of the truths of social science—shed some light in these dark places of speculation. Mr. Ripley, a born Democrat, in the high sense of that abused word, and one of the best cultured and most enlightened men in America, made an attempt at Brook-farm, in West Roxbury, so to organize society that the results of labor should remain in the workman's hand, and not slip thence to the trader's till; that there should be "no exploitation of man by man," but Toil and Thought, hard work and high culture, should be united in the same person.

The natural Rights of Woman began to be inquired into, and publicly discussed; while in private, great pains were taken in the chief towns of New England, to furnish a thorough and comprehensive education to such young maidens as were born with two talents, mind and money.

Of course, a strong reaction followed. At the Cambridge Divinity School, Prof. Henry Ware, Jr., told the young men, if there appeared to them any contradiction between the Reason of Man and the Letter of the Bible, they "must follow the written word," "for you can never be so certain of the correctness of what takes place in your own mind, as of what is written in the Bible." In an ordination sermon, he told the young minister not to preach himself, but Christ; and not to appeal to Human Nature for proof of doctrines, but to the Authority of Revelation. Other Unitarian ministers declared, "There are limits to free inquiry;" and preached, "Reason must be put down, or she will soon ask terrible questions;" protested against the union of Philosophy and Religion, and assumed to "prohibit the banns" of marriage between the two. Mr. Norton — then a great name at Cambridge, a scholar of rare but contracted merit, a careful and exact writer, born for controversy, really learned and able in his special department, the Interpretations of the New Testament — opened his mouth and spoke: the mass of men must

accept the doctrines of religion solely on the authority of the learned, as they do the doctrines of mathematical astronomy; the miracles of Jesus, — he made merry at those of the Old Testament, — are the only evidence of the truth of Christianity; in the popular religion of the Greeks and Romans, there was no conception of God; the new philosophic attempts to explain the facts of religious consciousness, were "the Latest Form of Infidelity;" the great philosophical and theological thinkers of Germany, were "all Atheists;" "Schleiermacher was an Atheist," as was also Spinoza, his master, before him; and Cousin, who was only "that Frenchman," was no better; the study of philosophy, and the neglect of "biblical criticism," were leading mankind to ruin, — everywhere was instability and insecurity!

Of course, this reaction was supported by the Ministers in the great Churches of Commerce, and by the old literary periodicals, — which never knew a star was risen till men wondered at it in the zenith; the Unitarian Journals gradually went over to the opponents of freedom and progress, with lofty scorn rejecting their former principles, and repeating the conduct they had once complained of; Cambridge and Princeton seemed to be interchanging cards. From such hands, Cousin and Emerson could not receive needed criticism, but only vulgar abuse. Dr. Channing could "not draw a long breath in Boston," where

he found the successors of Paul trembling before the successors of Felix. Even Trinitarian Moses Stuart seemed scarcely safe in his hard-bottomed Hopkinsian chair, at Andover. The Trinitarian ministers and city schoolmasters galled Horace Mann with continual assaults on his measures for educating the people. Unitarian ministers struck hands with wealthy liquor-dealers to drive Mr. Pierpont from his pulpit, where he valiantly preached "Temperance, Righteousness, and Judgment to come," appealing to "a day after to-day." Prominent Anti-Slavery men were dropped out of all wealthy society in Boston, their former friends not knowing them in the street; Mr. Garrison was mobbed by men in handsome coats, and found defence from their fury only in a jail; an assembly of women, consulting for the liberation of their darker sisters, was driven with hootings into the street. The Attorney General of Massachusetts brought an indictment for blasphemy against a country minister, one of the most learned biblical scholars in America, for publicly proving that none of the "Messianic prophecies" of the Old Testament was ever fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth, who accordingly was not the expected Christ of the Jews. Abner Kneeland, editor of a newspaper, in which he boasted of the name "Infidel," was clapped in jail for writing against the ecclesiastical notion of God, — the last man ever punished for blasphemy in the State. At the beck of a Virginian

slave-holder, the Governor of Massachusetts suggested to the Legislature the expediency of abridging the old New England liberty of speech!

The movement party established a new Quarterly, the *Dial*, wherein their wisdom and their folly rode together on the same saddle, to the amazement of lookers-on. The short-lived journal had a narrow circulation, but its most significant papers were scattered wide by newspapers which copied them. A *Quarterly Review* was also established by Mr. Brownson, then a Unitarian Minister and "sceptical democrat" of the most extravagant class, but now a Catholic, a powerful advocate of material and spiritual despotism, and perhaps the ablest writer in America against the Rights of Man and the Welfare of his race. In this he diffused important philosophic ideas, displayed and disciplined his own extraordinary talents for philosophic thought and popular writing, and directed them towards Democracy, Transcendentalism, "New Views," and the "Progress of the Species."

I count it a piece of good fortune that I was a young man when these things were taking place, when great questions were discussed, and the public had not yet taken sides.

After I became a minister I laid out an extensive plan of study, a continuation of previous work. I

intended to write a "History of the Progressive Development of Religion among the leading Races of Mankind," and attended at once to certain preliminaries. I studied the Bible more carefully and comprehensively than before, both the Criticism and Interpretation; and, in six or seven years, prepared an "Introduction to the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament," translated from the German of Dr. De Wette, the ablest writer in the world on that theme; the book as published was partly his and partly mine. This work led me to a careful study of the Christian Fathers of the first five centuries, and of most of the great works written about the Bible and Christianity. I intended to prepare a similar work on the New Testament, and the Apocrypha of both Old and New. I studied the philosophers, theologians and biblical critics of Germany, the only land where theology was then studied as a science, and developed with scientific freedom. I was much helped by the large learning and nice analysis of these great thinkers, who have done as much for the history of the Christian movement as Niebuhr for that of the Roman State. But as I studied the profound works of Catholic and Protestant, the regressive and the progressive men, and got instruction from all, I did not feel inclined to accept any one as my master, thinking it lawful to ride on their horses without being myself either saddled or bridled.

The critical study of the Bible only enhanced my reverence for the great and good things I found in the Old Testament and New. They were not the less valuable because they were not the work of "miraculous and infallible inspiration," and because I found them mixed with some of the worst doctrines ever taught by men; it was no strange thing to find pearls surrounded by sand, and roses beset with thorns. I liked the Bible better when I could consciously take its contradictory books each for what it is, and felt nothing commanding me to accept it for what it is not; and could freely use it as a help, not slavishly serve it as a master, or worship it as an idol. I took no doctrine for true, simply because it was in the Bible; what therein seemed false or wrong, I rejected as freely as if I had found it in the Sacred Books of the Buddhists or Mormons.

I had not preached long before I found, as never before, that practically, the ecclesiastical worship of the Bible hindered the religious welfare and progress of the Christians more than any other cause.

With Doctors, the Traditionary Drug was once a Fetish, which they reverenced and administered without much inquiring whether it would kill or cure. But now, fortunately, they are divided into so many sects, each terribly criticising the other, the spirit of philosophic scepticism and inquiry by experiment has so entered the profession, that many have broken with

that authority, and ask freely, "How can the sick man recover?" The worship of the Traditionary Drug is getting ended.

With Lawyers, the law of the land, custom, or promulgated statute, is also a Fetish. They do not ask, "Is the statute right?— will its application promote Justice?" which is the common interest of all men, but only, "Is it Law?" To this the judge and advocate must prostitute their conscience;— hence the personal ruin which so often is mistaken for personal success.

With Protestant ministers, the Bible is a Fetish; it is so with Catholic priests, likewise, only to them the Roman Church is the Master-Fetish, the "Big Thunder," while the Bible is but an inferior and subservient idol. For ultimate authority, the minister does not appeal to God, manifesting himself in the world of matter and the world of man, but only to the Bible; to that he prostitutes his mind and conscience, heart and soul; on the authority of an anonymous Hebrew book, he will justify the slaughter of innocent men, women and children, by the thousand; and, on that of an anonymous Greek book, he will believe, or at least command others to believe, that man is born totally depraved, and God will perpetually slaughter men in Hell by the million, though they had committed no fault, except that of not believing an absurd doctrine they had never heard of. Ministers take the Bible in

the lump as divine; all between the lids of the book is equally the "Word of God," infallible and miraculous; he that believeth it shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned; no amount of Piety and Morality can make up for not believing this. No Doctor is ever so subordinate to his Drug, no Lawyer lies so prone before Statute and Custom, as the mass of Ministers before the Bible, the great Fetish of Protestant Christendom. The Ephesians did not so worship their great goddess Diana and the meteoric stone which fell down from Jupiter. "We can believe anything," say they, "which has a 'Thus saith the Lord' before or after it." The Bible is not only Master of the Soul, it is also a talisman to keep men from harm; bodily contact with it, through hand or eye, is a part of Religion; — so it lies in railroad stations, in the parlors and sleeping chambers of taverns, and the cabins of ships, only to be seen and touched, not read. The pious mother puts it in the trunk of her prodigal son, about to travel, and while she knows he is wasting her substance upon harlots and in riotous living, she contents herself with the thought that "he has got his Bible with him, and promised to read a chapter every day!" So the Catholic mother uses an image of the "Virgin Mother of God," and the Rocky Mountain savage a bundle of grass: It is a Fetish.

But with this general worship of the Bible, there

is yet a cunning use of it; as the lawyers twist a statute to wring out a meaning they know it does not contain, but themselves put in, or warp a decision till it fits their purpose, so, with equal sophistry, and perhaps self-deceit, do the ministers twist the Bible to support their special doctrine: no book has been explained with such sophistry. Thus, some make the Apostle Paul a Unitarian, and find neither Divinity nor the Preëxistence ascribed to Jesus in the fourth Gospel; while others discover the full-blown Trinity in the first verse of the first chapter of the first book in the Bible; nay, yet others can find no Devil, no Wrathful God, and no Eternal Damnation, even in the New Testament. But all these ministers agree that the Bible is the "Word of God," "His only Word," miraculous and infallible, and that belief in it is indispensable to Christianity, and continually preach this to the people.

I had not been long a minister, before I found this worship of the Bible as a Fetish, hindering me at each progressive step. If I wished to teach the nobleness of man, the Old Testament and New were there with dreadful condemnations of Human Nature; did I speak of God's Love for all men, the Bible was full of ghastly things — Chosen People, Hell, Devil, Damnation — to prove that he loved only a few, and them not overmuch; did I encourage free individuality of soul, such as the great Bible-men themselves

had, asking all to be Christians as Jesus was a Christ, there were texts of bondage, commanding a belief in this or that absurdity. There was no virtue, but the Scriptures could furnish an argument against it. I could not deny the existence of ghosts and witches, devils and demons, haunting the earth, but revelation could be quoted against me. Nay, if I declared the Constancy of Nature's Laws, and sought therein great argument for the Constancy of God, all the miracles came and held their mythologic finger up. Even Slavery was "of God," for the "divine statutes" in the Old Testament admitted the Principle that man might own a man as well as a garden or an ox, and provided for the measure. Moses and the Prophets were on its side, and neither Paul of Tarsus nor Jesus of Nazareth uttered a direct word against it. The best thing in the Bible is the free Genius for Religion, which is itself inspiration, and not only learns particular Truths through its direct normal intercourse with God, but creates new men in its own likeness, to lead every Israel out of his Egypt, and conduct all men to the Land of Promise: whoso worships the Bible, loses this.

I set myself seriously to consider how I could best oppose this monstrous evil: it required great caution. I feared lest I should weaken men's natural trust in God, and their respect for true Religion, by rudely showing them that they worshipped an idol, and were

misled into gross superstition. This fear did not come from my nature, but from ecclesiastical tradition and the vice of a New England theologic culture. It has been the maxim of almost every sect in Christendom that the mass of men, in religious matters, must be ruled with authority, that is, by outward force; — this principle belongs to the Idea of a Supernatural Revelation; the people cannot determine for themselves what is true, moral, religious; their opinions must be made for them by supernatural authority, not by them through the normal use of their higher faculties! Hence the Catholic priest appeals to the supernatural Church to prove the infallibility of the Pope, the actual presence of the body and blood of Jesus in the sacramental bread and wine; hence the Protestant appeals to the supernatural Bible, to prove that Jesus was born with no human father, the total depravity of all men, the wrath of God, the existence of a Devil, and the eternal torments of Hell. Besides, the man of superior education is commonly separated from sympathizing with the people, and that by the very culture they have paid for with their toil, and which ought to unite the two; he has little confidence in their instinct or reflection.

I had some of these unnatural doubts and fears; but my chief anxiety came less from distrust of mankind, than from diffidence in my own power to tell the truth so clear and well that I should do no harm.

However, when I saw the evil which came from this superstition, I could not be silent. In conversation and preaching, I explained little details — this was poetry in the Bible, and not matter of fact; that was only the dress of the doctrine, not truth itself; the authors of Scripture were mistaken here and there; they believed in a Devil, which was a popular fancy of their times; a particular prophecy has never been fulfilled.

But the whole matter must be treated more philosophically, and set on its true foundation. So, designing to save men's reverence for the grand truths of the Bible, while I should wean them away from worshipping it, I soon laboriously wrote two sermons on the contradictions in the Scripture, — treating of Historic Contradictions, where one part is at variance with another, or with actual facts, authenticated by other witnesses; of Scientific Contradictions, passages at open variance with the facts of the material universe; and of Moral and Religious Contradictions, passages which were hostile to the highest intuitions and reflections of Human Nature. I made the discourses as perfect as I then could at that early stage of my life: very imperfect and incomplete I should, doubtless, find them now. I then inquired about the expediency of preaching them immediately. I had not yet enough practical experience of men to authorize me to depart from

the ecclesiastical distrust of the people; I consulted older and enlightened ministers. They all said, "No! Preach no such thing! You will only do harm!" One of the most learned and liberal ministers of New England advised me never to oppose the popular religion! "But, if it be wrong to hinder the religious welfare of the people—what then?" Why, let it alone; all the old philosophers did so; Socrates sacrificed a cock to Æsculapius! He that spits in the wind spits in his own face; you will ruin yourself, and do nobody any good!

Silenced, but not convinced, I kept my unpreached sermons, read books on kindred matters, and sought to make my work more complete as a whole, and more perfect in all its parts. At length, I consulted a very wise and thoughtful layman, old, with large social experience, and much esteemed for sound sense, one who knew the difficulties of the case, and would not let his young children read the Old Testament, lest it should injure their religious character. I told him my conviction and my doubts, asking his advice. He also thought silence wiser than speech, yet said there were many thoughtful men who felt troubled by the offensive things in the Bible, and would be grateful to any one who could show that Religion was independent thereof. But, he added, "If you try it, you will be misunderstood. Take the Society at ———, perhaps

one of the most intelligent in the city; you will preach your sermons, a few will understand and thank you. But the great vulgar, who hear imperfectly and remember imperfectly, and at the best understand but little, they will say, 'He finds faults in the Bible! What does it all mean; what have we got left?' And the little vulgar, who hear and remember still more imperfectly, and understand even less, they will exclaim, 'Why, the man is an Infidel! He tells us there are faults in the Bible. He is pulling down religion!' Then it will get into the newspapers, and all the ministers in the land will be down upon you! No good will be done, but much harm. You had better let it all alone!"

I kept my sermons more than a year, doubting whether the little congregation would be able to choose between Truth and Error when both were set before them, and fearing lest I should weaken their faith in pure religion, when I showed it was not responsible for the contradictions in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures! But at length I could wait no longer; and to ease my own conscience, I preached the two sermons, yet not venturing to look the audience in the face and see the immediate result. In the course of the week, men and women of the commonest education, but of earnest character and profound religious feeling, took pains

to tell me of the great comfort I had given them, by showing, what they had long felt, that the Bible is one thing and Religion another; that the two had no necessary connection; that the faults of the Old Testament or the New need not hinder any man from religious development; and that he never need try to believe a statement in the Bible which was at variance with his reason and his conscience. They thanked me for the attempt to apply Common Sense to Religion and the Bible. The most thoughtful and religious seemed the most instructed. I could not learn that any one felt less reverence for God, or less love for Piety and Morality. It was plain I had removed a stone of stumbling from the public path. The scales of ecclesiastical tradition fell from my eyes; by this crucial experiment, this guide-board instance, I learned that the mass of men need not be led blindfold by clerical authority, but had competent power of self-direction, and while they needed the scholar as their help, had no need of a self-appointed master. It was clear that a teacher of Religion and Theology should tell the world all he knew thereunto appertaining, as all teachers of Mathematics or of Chemistry are expected to do in their profession.

I had once felt very happy, when I could legitimate these three great primal instinctive intuitions, of the Divine, the Just, and the Immortal; I now felt

equally joyous at finding I might safely appeal to the same instincts in the mass of New England men, and build Religion on that imperishable foundation.

I continued my humble studies, philosophical and theological; and fast as I found a new Truth, I preached it to gladden other hearts in my own parish, and elsewhere, when I spoke in the pulpits of my friends. The neighboring ministers became familiar with my opinions and my practice, but seldom uttered a reproach. At length, on the 19th of May, 1841, at the ordination of Mr. Shackford, a thoughtful and promising young man, at South Boston, I preached a "Discourse of the Transient and Permanent in Christianity." The Trinitarian ministers who were present joined in a public protest; a great outcry was raised against the sermon and its author. Theological and commercial newspapers rung with animadversions against its wickedness. "Unbeliever," "Infidel," "Atheist," were the titles bestowed on me by my brothers in the Christian ministry; a venerable minister, who heard the report in an adjoining county, printed his letter in one of the most widely circulated journals of New England, calling on the Attorney General to prosecute, the Grand Jury to indict, and the Judge to sentence me to three years' confinement in the State Prison, for blasphemy!

I printed the Sermon; but no bookseller in Boston would put his name to the title-page, — Unitarian

ministers had been busy with their advice. The Swedenborgian printers volunteered the protection of their name; the little pamphlet was thus published, sold, and vehemently denounced. Most of my clerical friends fell off; some would not speak to me in the street, and refused to take me by the hand; in their public meetings they left the sofas or benches when I sat down, and withdrew from me as Jews from contact with a leper. In a few months most of my former ministerial coadjutors forsook me, and there were only six who would allow me to enter their pulpits. But yet one Unitarian minister, Rev. John L. Russell, though a stranger till then, presently after came and offered me his help in my time of need! The controlling men of the denomination determined, "This young man must be silenced!" The Unitarian periodicals were shut against me and my friends — the public must not read what I wrote. Attempts were secretly made to alienate my little congregation, and expel me from my obscure station at West Roxbury. But I had not gone to war without counting the cost. I well knew beforehand what awaited me, and had determined to fight the battle through, and never thought of yielding or being silenced. I told my opponents the only man who could "put me down" was myself, and I trusted I should do nothing to bring about that result. If thrust out of my own pulpit, I made up my mind to lecture from city to

city, from town to town, from village to village, nay, if need were, from house to house, well assured that I should not thus go over the hamlets of New England till something was come. But the little Society came generously to my support and defence, giving me the heartiest sympathy, and offered me all the indulgence in their power. Some ministers and generous-minded laymen stood up on my side, and preached or wrote in defence of free thought and free speech, even in the pulpit. Friendly persons, both men and women, wrote me letters to cheer and encourage, also to warn — this against fear, that against excess and violence; some of them never gave me their names, and I have only this late opportunity to thank them for their anonymous kindness. Of course, scurrilous and abusive letters did not fail to appear.

Five or six men in Boston thought this treatment was not quite fair; they wished to judge neither a man nor his doctrines unheard, but to know at length what I had to say; so they asked me to deliver a course of five lectures in your city, on religious matters. I consented, and in the autumn of 1841 delivered five lectures on "Matters pertaining to Religion;" they were reported in some of the newspapers, most ably and fully in the *New York Tribune*, not then the famous and powerful sheet it has since become. I delivered the lectures

several times that winter in the New England towns, and published them in a volume the next spring. I thought no bookseller would put his name to the title-page; but when the work was ready for the public eye, my friend, the late Mr. James Brown, perhaps the most eminent man in the American book trade, volunteered to take charge of it, and the book appeared with the advantage of issuing from one of the most respectable publishing-houses in the United States. Years afterwards he told me that two "rich and highly respectable gentlemen of Boston" begged him to have nothing to do with it; "we wish," said they, "to render it impossible for him to publish his work!" But the bookseller wanted fair play.

The next autumn I delivered in Boston six "Sermons for the Times," treating of Theology, of Religion, and of its application to Life. These also were repeated in several other places.

But, weary with anxiety and excess of work, both public and private, my health began to be seriously impaired, and in September, 1843, I fled off to Europe, to spend a year in recovery, observation, and thought. I had there an opportunity to study nations I had previously known only by their literature, and by other men's words; to see the effect which despotic, monarchic, and aristocratic institutions have on multitudes of men, who, from

generation to generation, had lived under them; to study the effect of those forms of religion which are enforced by the inquisitor or the constable; and, in many forms, to see the difference between freedom and bondage. In their architecture, painting, and sculpture, the European cities afforded me a new world of Art, while the heterogeneous crowds which throng the streets of those vast ancient capitals, so rich in their historic monuments, presented human life in forms I had not known before. It is only in the low parts of London, Paris, and Naples, that an American learns what the Ancients meant by the "People," the "Populace," and sees what Barbarism may exist in the midst of wealth, culture, refinement, and manly virtue. There I could learn what warning and what guidance the Old World had to offer to the New. Visiting some of the seats of learning, which, in Europe, are also sometimes the citadel of new thought and homes of genius, I had an opportunity of conversing with eminent men, and comparing their schemes for improving mankind with my own. Still more, I had an entire year, free from all practical duties, for revising my own philosophy and theology, and laying out plans for future work. My involuntary year of rest and inaction turned out, perhaps, the most profitable in my life, up to that time, in the acquisition of knowledge and in preparing for much that was to follow.

Coming home the next September, with more physical strength than ever before, I found a hearty welcome from the many friends who crowded the little Meeting House to welcome my return — as before to bid me God-speed — and resumed my usual labors, public and private. In my absence, my theological foes had contented themselves with declaring that my doctrines had taken no root in America, and my personal friends were turning off from the error of their ways; but the sound of my voice roused my opponents to new activity, and ere long the pulpits and newspapers rang with the accustomed warfare. But even in Boston, there were earnest ministers who lifted up their voices in behalf of freedom of thought in the study, and free speech in the pulpit. I shall never cease to be grateful to Mr. Pierpont, Mr. Sargent, and James Freeman Clarke, "friends in need, and friends in deed." They defended the Principle of Religious Freedom, though they did not share the opinions it led me to, nor always approve of the manner in which I set them forth. It was zeal for the True and the Right, not special personal friendship for me, which moved them to this manly course. In the most important Orthodox Quarterly in America, a young Trinitarian minister, Rev. Mr. Porter, reviewed my Discourse of Religion, not doing injustice to author or work, while he stoutly opposed both. A few other friendly words were also spoken; but what were these among so many!

Under these circumstances you formed your Society: A few earnest men thought the great Principle of Religious Freedom was in danger; for, indeed, it was ecclesiastically repudiated, and that too with scorn and hissing, by the Unitarians—the "Liberal Christians!" the "Party of Progress"—not less than by the Orthodox. Some of you came together, privately at first, and then in public, to look matters in the face, and consider what ought to be done. A young man proposed this resolution: "*Resolved*, That the Rev. Theodore Parker shall have a chance to be heard in Boston." That motion prevailed, and measures were soon taken to make the resolution an event. But, so low was our reputation, that, though payment was offered in advance, of all the unoccupied halls in Boston, only one could be hired for our purpose; but that was the largest and most central. So, one rainy Sunday, the streets full of snow, on the 16th of February, 1845, for the first time, I stood before you to preach and pray: we were strangers then! I spoke of the "Indispensableness of True Religion for Man's Welfare in his Individual and his Social Life." I came to build up Piety and Morality; to pull down only what cumbered the ground. I was then in my thirty-fifth year, and had some knowledge of the historical development of Religion in the Christian world. I knew that I came to a Thirty Years' War, and I had enlisted for the whole, should life hold out so long. I knew

well what we had to expect at first; for we were committing the sin which all the great world-sects have held unpardonable—attempting to correct the Errors of Theory and the Vices of Practice in the church. No offence could ecclesiastically be greater; the Inquisition was built to punish such; to that end blazed the fagots at Smithfield, and the Cross was set up on Calvary. Truth has her cradle near Golgotha. You knew my spirit and tendency better than my special opinions, which you then gave a "chance to be heard in Boston." But I knew that I had thoroughly broken with the ecclesiastical authority of Christendom; its God was not my God, nor its Scriptures my Word of God, nor its Christ my Saviour; for I preferred the Jesus of historic fact to the Christ of theologic fancy. Its narrow, partial and unnatural Heaven I did not wish to enter on the terms proposed, nor did I fear, since earliest youth, its mythic, roomy Hell, wherein the Triune God, with his pack of devils to aid, tore the Human Race in pieces for ever and ever. I came to preach "another Gospel," Sentiments, Ideas, Actions, quite unlike what belonged to the theology of the Christian church. Though, severely in earnest, I came to educate men into true Religion as well as I could, I knew I should be accounted the worst of men, ranked among triflers, mockers, infidels, and atheists. But I did not know all the public had to offer me of good or ill; nay, I did not know what was

latent in myself, nor foresee all the doctrines which then were hid in my own first principles, what embryo fruits and flowers lay sheathed in the obvious bud. But at the beginning I warned you that if you came, Sunday after Sunday, you would soon think very much as I did on the great matters you asked me to teach — because I had drawn my doctrine from the same Human Nature which was in you, and that would recognize and own its child.

Let me arrange, under three heads, some of the most important doctrines I have aimed to set forth.

I. The Infinite Perfection of God.—This doctrine is the corner-stone of all my theological and religious teaching—the foundation, perhaps, of all that is peculiar in my system. It is not known to the Old Testament or the New; it has never been accepted by any sect in the Christian world; for, though it be equally claimed by all, from the Catholic to the Mormon, none has ever consistently developed it, even in theory, but all continually limit God in Power, in Wisdom, and still more eminently in Justice and in Love. The idea of God's Imperfection has been carried out with dreadful logic in the "Christian Scheme." Thus it is commonly taught, in all the great theologies, that, at the Crucifixion of Jesus, "the Creator of the Uni-

verse was put to death, and his own creatures were his executioners." Besides, in the ecclesiastic conception of Deity, there is a fourth person to the Godhead, namely, the Devil, an outlying member, unacknowledged, indeed, the complex of all evil, but as much a part of Deity as either Son or Holy Ghost, and far more powerful than all the rest, who seem but jackals to provide for this "roaring lion," which devours what the others but create, die for, inspire, and fill. I know this statement is ghastly,— the theologic notion it sets forth, to me seems far more so. While the Christians accept the Bible as the "Word of God," direct, miraculous, infallible, containing a complete and perfect "revelation" of His Nature, His Character and Conduct, it is quite impossible for them to accept, or even tolerate, the Infinite Perfection of God. The imperfect and cruel character attributed to God, rejoicing in his Hell and its legions of devils, is the fundamental vice of the ecclesiastical theology, which so many accept as their "Religion," and name the hideous thing "Christianity!" They cannot escape the consequence of their first principle; their gate must turn on its own hinge.

I have taught that God contains all possible and conceivable perfection:—the Perfection of Being, Self-subsistence, conditioned only by itself; the Perfection of Power, All-mightiness; of Mind, All-knowingness; of Conscience, All-righteousness; of Affection, All-

lovingness; and the Perfection of that innermost Element, which in finite man is Personality, All-holiness, faithfulness to Himself.

This infinitely perfect God is immanent in the World of Matter, and in the World of Spirit, the two hemispheres which to us make up the Universe: each particle thereof is inseparable from Him, while He yet transcends both, is limited by neither, but in Himself is complete and perfect.

I have not taught that the special qualities I find in the Deity are all that are actually there; higher and more must doubtless appear to beings of larger powers than man's. My definition distinguishes God from all other beings; it does not limit him to the details of my conception. I only tell what I know, not what others may know, which lies beyond my present consciousness.

He is a Perfect Creator, making all from a perfect Motive, for a perfect Purpose, of perfect Substance, and as a perfect Means; none other are conceivable with a Perfect God. The Motive must be Love, the Purpose Welfare, the Means the Constitution of the Universe itself, as a whole and in parts — for each great or little thing coming from Him must be perfectly adapted to secure the Purpose it was intended for, and achieve the End it was meant to serve, and represent the Causal Motive which brought it forth. So there must be a complete solidarity

between God and the two-fold Universe which he creates. The Perfect Creator is thus also a Perfect Providence; indeed, Creation and Providence are not objective accidents of Deity, nor subjective caprices, but the development of the perfect Motive to its perfect Purpose, Love becoming a Universe of perfect Welfare.

I have called God Father, but also Mother, not by this figure implying that the Divine Being has the limitations of the female figure — as some ministers deceitfully allege of late, who might have been supposed to know better than thus to pervert plain speech, — but to express more sensibly the quality of tender and unselfish Love, which mankind associates more with Mother than aught else beside.

II. The Adequacy of Man for all his Functions. —From the Infinite Perfection of God there follows unavoidably the relative perfection of all that He creates. So, the nature of man, tending to a progressive development of all his manifold powers, must be the best possible nature, most fit for the perfect accomplishment of the perfect Purpose, and the attainment of the perfect End, which God designs for the race and the individual. It is not difficult in this general way to show the relative perfection of Human Nature, deducing this from the Infinite Perfection of God; but I think it impossible to prove it

by the inductive process of reasoning from concrete facts of external observation, of which we know not yet the entire sum, nor any one, perhaps, completely. Yet I have travelled also this inductive road, as far as it reaches, and tried to show the constitution of man's Body, with its adaptation to the surrounding world of matter, and the constitution of his Spirit, with its intellectual, moral, affectional, and religious powers, and its Harmonious Relation with the world of matter, which affords them a playground, a school, and a workshop. So I have continually taught that man has in himself all the faculties he needs to accomplish his high destination, and in the world of matter finds, one by one, all the material helps he requires.

We all see the Unity of Life in the Individual; his gradual growth from merely sentient and passive babyhood, up to thoughtful, self-directing manhood. I have tried to show there was a similar Unity of Life in the Human Race, pointing out the analogous progressive development of Mankind, from the state of ignorance, poverty, and utter nakedness of soul and sense, the necessary primitive conditions of the race, up to the present Civilization of the leading nations. The primitive is a wild man, who gradually grows up to civilization. To me, the notorious facts of human history, the condition of language, art, industry, and the foot-prints of man left all over the torrid and temperate lands, admit of no other inter-

pretation. Of course it must have required many a thousand years for Divine Providence to bring this child from his mute, naked, ignorant poverty, up to the many-voiced, many-colored civilization of these times; and, as in the strata of mountain and plain, on the shores of the sea, and under "the bottom of the monstrous world," the geologist finds proof of time immense, wherein this Material Cosmos assumed its present form, so in ruins of cities, in the weapons of iron, bronze, or stone, found in Scandinavian swamps, on the sub-aquatic enclosures of the Swiss lakes, in the remains of Egyptian industry, which the holy Nile, "mother of blessings,"— now spiritual to us, as once material to those whose flesh she fed— has covered with many folds of earth and kept for us; and still more in the history of Art, Science, War, Industry, and the Structure of Language itself, a slow-growing plant, do I find proof of time immense, wherein Man, this Spiritual Cosmos, has been assuming his present condition, individual, domestic, social, and national, and accumulating that wealth of things and thoughts which is the mark of civilization. I have tried to show by history the progressive development of Industry and Wealth, of Mind and Knowledge, of Conscience and Justice, of the Affections and Philanthropy, of the Soul and True Religion; the many forms of the Family, the Community, State and Church, I look on as so many "experiments in

living," all useful, each, perhaps, in its time and place as indispensable as the various geological changes. But this progressive development does not end with us; we have seen only the beginning; the future triumphs of the race must be vastly greater than all accomplished yet. In the primal instincts and automatic desires of Man, I have found a prophecy that what he wants is possible, and shall one day be actual. It is a glorious future on earth which I have set before your eyes and hopes, thereby stimulating both your patience to bear now what is inevitable, and your thought and toil to secure a future triumph to be had on no other terms. What good is not with us is before, to be attained by Toil and Thought, and Religious Life.

III. Absolute or Natural Religion.—In its complete and perfect form, this is the normal development, use, discipline, and enjoyment of every part of the body, and every faculty of the spirit; the direction of all natural powers to their natural purposes. I have taught that there were three parts which make up the sum of true religion: the Emotional part, of right Feelings, where religion at first begins in the automatic, primal instinct; the Intellectual part, of true Ideas, which either directly represent the primitive, instinctive feeling of whoso holds them, or else produce a kindred, secondary and

derivative feeling in whoso receives them; and the Practical part, of just Actions, which correspond to the feelings and the ideas, and make the mere thought or emotion into a concrete deed. So, the true Religion which comes from the Nature of Man, consists of normal feelings towards God and man, of correct thoughts about God, man, and the relation between them, and of actions corresponding to the natural conscience when developed in harmony with the entire constitution of man.

But this religion which begins in the instinctive feelings, and thence advances to reflective ideas, assumes its ultimate form in the character of men, and so appears in their actions, individual, domestic, social, national, ecclesiastical, and general — human; it builds manifold institutions like itself, wherein it rears up men in its own image. All the six great historic forms of religion — the Brahmanic, Hebrew, Classic, Buddhistic, Christian, Mohammedan — profess to have come miraculously from God, not normally from man; and, spite of the excellence which they contain, and the vast service the humblest of them has done, yet each must ere long prove a hindrance to human welfare, for it claims to be a Finality, and makes the whole of human nature wait upon an accident of human History — and that accident the whim of some single man. The Absolute Religion which belongs to man's nature, and is gradually unfolded thence, like

the high achievements of art, science, literature and politics, is only distinctly conceived of in an advanced stage of man's growth: to make its idea a Fact, is the highest triumph of the Human Race. This is the Ideal of Humanity, dimly seen but clearly felt, which has flitted before the pious eyes of men in all lands and many an age, and been prayed for as the "Kingdom of Heaven." The religious history of the race is the record of man's continual but unconscious efforts to attain this "Desire of all nations;" poetic stories of the "golden age," or of man in the garden of Eden, are but this natural wish looking back and fondly dreaming that "the former days were better than these." But while all the other forms of religion must ultimately fail before this, fading as it flowers, each one of them has yet been a help towards it, probably indispensable to the development of mankind. For each has grown out of the condition of some people, as naturally as the wild primitive Flora of Santa Cruz has come from the state of this island—its geologic structure and chemical composition, its tropic heat, and its special situation amid the great currents of water and of air; as naturally as the dependent Fauna of the place comes from its Flora. Thus in the religions of mankind, as in the various governments, nay, as in the different geologic periods, there is diversity of form, but Unity of Aim: destruction is only to create; Earthquakes, which submerged

the sunken continents whose former mountains are but islands now, and Revolutions, in which the Hebrew and Classic religions went under, their poetic summits only visible, have analogous functions to perform — Handmaids of Creation both.

For these three great doctrines — of God, of Man, of Religion — I have depended on no Church and no Scripture; yet have I found things to serve me in all Scriptures and every Church. I have sought my authority in the Nature of Man — in facts of consciousness within me, and facts of observation in the human world without. To me the Material World and the outward History of Man do not supply a sufficient revelation of God, nor warrant me to speak of Infinite Perfection. It is only from the Nature of Man, from facts of intuition, that I can gather this greatest of all truths, as I find it in my consciousness reflected back from Deity itself.

I know well what may be said of the "Feebleness of all the Human Faculties," their "unfaithfulness and unfitness for their work;" — that the mind is not adequate for man's intellectual function, nor the conscience for the moral, nor the affections for the philanthropic, nor the soul for the religious, nor even the body for the corporeal, but that each requires miraculous help from a God who is only outside of

Humanity! There is a denial which boldly rejects the Immortality of Man and the existence of Deity, with many another doctrine, dear and precious to mankind: but the most dangerous scepticism is that, which, professing allegiance to all these, and crossing itself at the name of Jesus, is yet so false to the great Primeval Instincts of Man, that it declares he cannot be certain of anything he learns by the normal exercise of any faculty! I have carefully studied this School of Doubt, modern, not less than old, as it appears in history. In it there are honest inquirers after truth, but misled by some accident, and also sophists, who live by their sleight of mind, as jugglers by their dexterity of hand. But the chief members of this body are the Mockers, who, in a world they make empty, find the most fitting echo to their hideous laugh; and Churchmen of all denominations, who are so anxious to support their ecclesiastic theology, that they think it is not safe on its throne till they have annihilated the claim of Reason, Conscience, the Affections and the Soul to any voice in determining the greatest concerns of man — thinking there is no place for the Christian Church or the Bible till they have nullified the faculties which created both, and rendered Bible-makers and Church-founders impossible. But it is rather a poor compliment these ecclesiastic sceptics pay their Deity, to say He so makes and manages the world that we

cannot trust the sights we see, the sounds we hear, the thoughts we think, or the moral, affectional, religious emotions we feel; that we are certain neither of the intuitions of instinct, nor the demonstrations of reason, but yet by some anonymous testimony, can be made sure that Balaam's she-ass spoke certain Hebrew words, and one undivided third part of God was "born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, descended into Hell, and the third day rose again," to take away the wrath which the other two undivided third parts of God felt against all mankind!

It is not for me to say there is no limit to the possible attainments of man's religious or other faculties. I will not dogmatize where I do not know. But history shows that the Hercules' Pillars of one age are sailed through in the next, and a wide ocean entered on, which in due time is found rich with islands of its own, and washing a vast continent not dreamed of by such as slept within their temples old, while it sent to their very coasts its curious joints of unwonted cane, its seeds of many an unknown tree, and even elaborate boats, wherein lay the starved bodies of strange-featured men, with golden jewels in their ears. No doubt there are limits to human Industry, for finite man is bounded on every side; but, I take it, the Hottentot, the Gaboon Negro, and the Wild Man of New Guinea, antecedently, would think it

impossible that mankind should build the Pyramids of Egypt for royal ostentation, for defence throw up the fortresses of Europe and the wall of China, or for economic use lay down the roads of earth, of water, iron, wood, or stone, which now so swiftly help develop the material resources and educate the spiritual powers of Europe and America. Still less would they conceive it possible for men to make all the farms, the mills, the shops, the houses, and the ships of civilized mankind. But the philosopher sees it is possible for toil and thought soon to double, and then multiply manifold the industrial attainments of Britain or New England.

No doubt there may be a limit to Mathematic Thought, though to me that would seem boundless, and every scientific step therein to be certain; but the barefooted negro who goads his oxen under my window, and can only count his two thumbs, is no limit to Archimedes, Descartes, Newton, and La Place; no more are these men of vast genius a limit to the mathematic possibility of humankind. They who invented letters, arithmetic symbols, gunpowder, the compass, the printing press, the telescope, the steam-engine, and the telegraph, only ploughed in corners of the field of human possibility, and showed its bounds were not where they had been supposed. A thousand years ago, the world had not a man, I think, who could even dream of such a welfare as

New England now enjoys! Who shall tell industrious, mathematic, progressive mankind, "Stop there! you have reached the utmost bound of human possibility; beyond it, economy is waste, and science folly, and progress downfall!" No more is the atheistic mocker or the ecclesiastic bigot commissioned to stop the Human Race, with his cry, "Cease there, Mankind, thy religious search! for, thousand-million-headed as thou art, thou canst know naught directly of thy God, thy duty, or thyself! Pause, and accept my unauthenticated word; stop, and despair!"

I know too well the atheistic philosopher's bitter mock, and the haughty scorn of theologic despisers of mankind, who, diverse in all besides, yet agree in their contempt for Human Nature, glory in the errors of genius, or the grosser follies of mankind, and seek out of the ruins of Humanity, to build up, the one his palace, and the other his church. But I also know that Mankind heeds neither the atheistic philosopher nor the theologic despiser of his kind; but, faithful to the great Primeval Instincts of the Soul, believing, creating and rejoicing, goes on its upward way, nor doubts of Man or God, of Sense or Intellect.

These three great doctrines I have preached positively, as abstract Truth, representing Facts of the Universe: that might be peaceful work. But they

must take a concrete form, and be applied to the actual Life of the Individual, Family, Community, State and Church: this would have a less peaceful look; for I must examine actual institutions, and criticise their aim, their mode of operation, and their result. The great obvious Social Forces in America may be thus summed up: —

1. There is the organized Trading Power, — having its home in the great towns, which seeks gain with small regard to that large Justice which represents alike the mutual interests and duties of all men, and to that Humanity which interposes the affectional instinct when Conscience is asleep. This power seems to control all things, amenable only to the all-mighty dollar.

2. The organized Political Power, the parties in office, or seeking to become so. This makes the statutes, but is commonly controlled by the trading power, and has all of its faults, often intensified; yet it seems amenable to the instincts of the People, who, on great occasions, sometimes interfere and change the traders' rule.

3. The organized Ecclesiastical Power, the various sects which, though quite unlike, yet all mainly agree in their fundamental Principle of Vicariousness — an alleged Revelation, instead of actual human faculties, salvation from God's wrath and eternal ruin, by the Atoning Blood of crucified God. This is more

able than either of the others; and though often despised, in a few years can control them both. In this generation no American politician dares affront it.

4. The organized Literary Power, the endowed colleges, the periodical press, with its triple multitude of journals—commercial, political, theological—and sectarian tracts. This has no original ideas, but diffuses the opinion of the other powers whom it represents, whose Will it serves, and whose Kaleidoscope it is.

I must examine these four great Social Forces, and show what was good in them, and what ill; ascertain what Natural Religion demanded of each, and what was the true function of Trade, Government, a Church, and a Literature. When I came to a distinct consciousness of my own first principle, and my consequent relation to what was about me, spite of the good they contained, I found myself greatly at variance with all the four. They had one principle, and I another; of course, our aim and direction were commonly different, and often opposite. Soon I found that I was not welcome to the American Market, State, Church, nor Press. It could not be otherwise; yet I confess I had not anticipated so thorough a separation betwixt me and these forces which control society, but had laid out work I could not execute alone, nor perhaps without the aid of all the four.

It is not now, my Friends, worth while for me to enter on the details of these plans which have come to nothing, and which I shall probably never work out; but I ought at least to name some of the most important things I hoped to do. When I first came to Boston I intended to do something for the Perishing and Dangerous Classes in our great towns. The amount of poverty and consequent immorality in Boston is terrible to think of, while you remember the warning of other nations, and look to the day after to-day! Yet it seemed to me the money given by public and private charity — two fountains that never fail in Puritanic Boston — was more than sufficient to relieve it all, and gradually remove the deep-seated and unseen cause which, in the hurry of business and of money, is not attended to. There is a hole in the dim-lit public bridge, where many fall through and perish. Our mercy pulls a few out of the water; it does not stop the hole, nor light the bridge, nor warn men of the peril! We need the great Charity that palliates effects of wrong, and the greater Justice which removes the Cause.

Then there was Drunkenness, which is the greatest concrete curse of the laboring Protestant population of the North, working most hideous and wide extended desolation. It is fatal as starvation to the Irish Catholic. None of the four great social forces is its foe. There, too, was Prostitution; men and

women mutually polluted and polluting, blackening the face of society with dreadful woe. Besides, in our great towns I found thousands, especially the poorer Irish, oppression driving them to us, who, save the discipline of occasional work, got no education here, except what the streets taught them in childhood, or the Popish priest, and the American demagogue,—their two worst foes,—noisily offered in their adult years; it seemed to me not difficult for the vast charity of Boston to furnish instruction and guidance to this class of the American people, both in their childhood and their later youth. That admirable institution, the Warren Street Chapel—well nigh the most Christian public thing in Boston,—and the Children's Aid Society at New York, with its kindred, abundantly show how much can be done, and at how little cost.

Still more, I learned early in life that the Criminal is often the victim of society, rather than its foe, and that our penal law belongs to the dark ages of brute force, and aims only to protect society by vengeance on the felon, not also to elevate mankind by refining him. In my boyhood I knew a man, the last result of generations of ancestral crime, who spent more than twenty years in our State Prison, and died there, under sentence for life, whose entire illegal thefts did not amount to twenty dollars! and another, not better born, who lawfully stole houses and farms,

lived a "Gentleman," and at death left a considerable estate, and the name of Land-shark. While a theological student, I taught a class in the Sunday School of the State Prison, often saw my fellow-townsman, became well acquainted with several convicts, learned the mode of treatment, and heard the sermons and ghastly prayers which were let fly at the heads of the poor, unprotected wretches; I saw the "Orthodox preachers and other helps," who gave them "spiritual instruction," and learned the utter insufficiency of our penal law to mend the felon or prevent his growth in wickedness. When I became your minister I hoped to do something for this class of men, whose crimes are sometimes but a part of their congenital misfortune or social infamy, and who are bereft of the sympathy of mankind, and unconstitutionally beset with sectarian ministers, whose function is to torment them before their time.

For all these, the Poor, the Drunken, and the Ignorant, for the Prostitute and the Criminal, I meant to do something, under the guidance, perhaps, or certainly with the help, of the controlling men of the Town or State; but, alas! I was then fourteen years younger than now, and did not quite understand all the consequences of my relation to these great social forces, or how much I had offended the religion of the State, the Press, the Market and the Church. The cry, "Destroyer," "Fanatic," "Infidel," "Atheist," "Enemy

of Mankind," was so widely sounded forth that I soon found I could do little in these great philanthropies, where the evil lay at our own door. Many as you are for a religious society, you were too few and too poor to undertake what should be done; and outside of your ranks I could look for little help, even by words and counsel. Besides, I soon found my very name was enough to ruin any new good enterprise. I knew there were three periods in each great movement of mankind — that of Sentiment, Ideas, and Action: I fondly hoped the last had come; but when I found I had reckoned without the host, I turned my attention to the two former, and sought to arouse the Sentiment of Justice and Mercy, and to diffuse the Ideas which belonged to this fivefold reformation. Hence I took pains to state the Facts of Poverty, Drunkenness, Ignorance, Prostitution, Crime; to show their Cause, their Effect, and their Mode of Cure, leaving it for others to do the practical work. So, if I wanted a measure carried in the Legislature of the Town or State, or by some Private Benevolent Society, I did my work by stealth. I sometimes saw my scheme prosper, and read my words in the public reports, while the whole enterprise had been ruined at once if my face or name had appeared in connection with it. I have often found it wise to withhold my name from petitions I have myself set agoing and found successful; I have got up conventions, or mass

meetings, whose "managers" asked me not to show my face thereat.

This chronic and progressive unpopularity led to another change of my plans, not abating my activity, but turning it in another direction. To accomplish my work, I must spread my Ideas as widely as possible, without resorting to that indecency of advertising so common in America. There was but one considerable Publishing House in the land that would continue to issue my works, — this only at my own cost and risk. As it had only a pecuniary interest therein, and that so slight, in its enormous business, my books did not have the usual opportunity of getting known and circulated. They were seldom offered for sale, except in one bookstore in Boston; for other States, I must often be my own bookseller. None of the Quarterlies or Monthlies was friendly to me; most of the newspapers were hostile; the *New York Tribune* and *Evening Post* were almost the only exceptions. So my books had but a small circulation at home in comparison with their diffusion in England and Germany, where, also, they received not only hostile, but most kindly notice, and sometimes from a famous pen. But another opportunity for diffusing my thought offered itself in the Lyceum or Public Lecture. Opposed by these four great social forces at home, I was surprised to find myself becoming popular in the Lecture hall. After a few trials I

"got the *hang* of the new school-house," and set myself to serious work therein.

For a dozen years or more, I have done my share of lecturing in public, having many invitations more than I could accept. The task was always disagreeable, contrary to my natural disposition and my scholarly habits. But I saw the nation had reached an important crisis in its destination, and, though ignorant of the fact, yet stood hesitating between two principles. The one was Slavery, which I knew leads at once to Military Despotism — political, ecclesiastical, social, — and ends at last in utter and hopeless ruin; for no People fallen on that road has ever risen again; it is the path so many other Republics have taken and finished their course, as Athens and the Ionian towns have done, as Rome and the Commonwealths of the Middle Ages. The other was Freedom, which leads at once to Industrial Democracy — respect for labor, government over all, by all, for the sake of all, rule after the Eternal Right as it is writ in the Constitution of the Universe, — securing welfare and progress. I saw that these four social forces were advising, driving, coaxing, wheedling the People to take the road to ruin; that our "great men," in which "America is so rich beyond all other nations of the earth," went strutting along that path to show how safe it is, crying out "Democracy," "Constitution," "Washington," "Gos-

pel," "Christianity," "Dollars," and the like, while the instincts of the people, the traditions of our history, and the rising genius of men and women well-born in these times of peril, with still, small voice, whispered something of Self-evident Truths and Unalienable Rights.

I knew the power of a great Idea; and spite of the Market, the State, the Church, the Press, I thought a few earnest men in the Lecture Halls of the North, might yet incline the People's mind and heart to Justice and the Eternal Law of God — the only safe rule of conduct for nations, as for you and me, — and so make the American experiment a triumph and a joy for all Humankind. Nay, I thought I could myself be of some service in that work; for the nation was yet so young, and the instinct of popular liberty so strong, it seemed to me a little added weight would turn the scale to Freedom. So I appointed myself a Home Missionary for Lectures.

Then, too, I found I could say what I pleased in the lecture room, so long as I did not professedly put my thought into a theologic or political shape; while I kept the form of literature or philosophy, I could discourse of what I thought most important, and men would listen one hour, two hours, nay, three hours; and the more significant the subject was, the more freely, profoundly and fairly it was treated, the more would the people come, the more eagerly listen

and enthusiastically accept. So I spared no labor in preparation or delivery, but took it for granted the humblest audience, in the least intelligent town or city, was quite worthy of my best efforts, and could understand my facts and metaphysic reasonings. I did not fear the people would be offended, though I hurt their feelings never so sore.

Besides, the work was well paid for in the large towns, while the small ones did all they could afford, — giving the lecturer for a night more than the schoolmaster for a month. The money thus acquired, enabled me to do four desirable things, which it is not needful to speak of here.

Since 1848, I have lectured eighty or a hundred times each year, — in every Northern State east of the Mississippi, once also in a Slave State, and on Slavery itself. I have taken most exciting and important subjects, of the greatest concern to the American People, and treated them independent of sect or party, street or press, and with what learning and talent I could command. I put the matter in quite various forms — for each audience is made up of many. For eight or ten years, on the average, I have spoken to sixty or a hundred thousand persons in each year, besides addressing you on Sundays, in the great Hall you threw open to all comers.

Thus I have had a wide field of operation, where I

might rouse the Sentiment of Justice and Mercy, diffuse such Ideas as I thought needful for the welfare and progress of the people, and prepare for such Action as the occasion might one day require. As I was supposed to stand nearly alone, and did not pretend to represent any one but myself, nobody felt responsible for me; so all could judge me, if not fairly, at least with no party or sectarian prejudice in my favor; and as I felt responsible only to myself and my God, I could speak freely: this was a two-fold advantage. I hope I have not spoken in vain. I thought that by each lecture I could make a new, deep and lasting impression of some one Great Truth on five thoughtful men, out of each thousand who heard me. Don't think me extravagant; it is only *one half of one per cent.!* If I spoke but thus efficiently to sixty thousand in a winter, there would be three hundred so impressed, and in ten years it would be three thousand! Such a result would satisfy me for my work and my loss of scholarly time in this Home Mission for lectures. Besides, the newspapers of the large towns spread wide the more salient facts and striking generalizations of the lecture, and I addressed the eyes of an audience I could not count nor see.

Still more, in the railroad cars and steamboats I travelled by, and the public or private houses I stopped at, when the lecture was over, strangers came to

see me; they were generally marked men — intellectual, moral, philanthropic, at any rate, inquiring and attentive. We sometimes talked on great matters; I made many acquaintances, gained much miscellaneous information about men and things, the state of public opinion, and, perhaps, imparted something in return. So I studied while I taught.

Nor was this all. I had been ecclesiastically reported to the people as a "Disturber of the public peace," "an Infidel," "an Atheist," "an enemy to mankind." When I was to lecture in a little town, the minister, even the Unitarian, commonly stayed at home. Many, in public or private, warned their followers "against listening to that bad man. Do n't look him in the face!" Others stoutly preached against me. So, in the Bar-room "I was the song of the drunkard," and the minister's text in the Pulpit. But, when a few hundreds, in a mountain town of New England, or in some settlement on a prairie of the West, or, when many hundreds, in a wide city, did look me in the face, and listen for an hour or two while I spoke, plain, right-on, of matters familiar to their patriotic hopes, their business and their bosoms, as their faces glowed in the excitement of what they heard, I saw the clerical prejudice was stealing out of their mind, and I left them other than I found. Nay, it has often happened that a man has told me, by letter or word of mouth, "I was warned against you,

but I *would go and see for myself;* and when I came home I said, 'After all, this is a man, and not a Devil; at least he seems human. Who knows but he may be honest, even in his theological notions? Perhaps he is *right* in his Religion. Priests have been a little mistaken sometimes before now, and said hard words against rather good sort of men, if we can trust the Bible. I am glad I heard him!'"

Judging from the results, now pretty obvious to whoso looks, and by the many affectionate letters sent me from all parts of the North, I think I did not overrate the number of thoughtful men who possibly might be deeply and originally influenced by what I said in lectures. Three thousand may seem a large number; I think it is not excessive! In the last dozen years, I think scarcely any American, not holding a political office, has touched the minds of so many men, by freely speaking on matters of the greatest importance, for this day and for ages to come. I am sure I have uttered great Truths, and such are never spoke in vain; I know the effect a few great thoughts had on me in my youth, and judge others by what I experienced myself. Those ministers were in the right, who, years ago, said: "Keep that man out of the lecture-room; don't let him be seen in public. Every word he speaks, on any subject, is a blow against our religion!" They meant, against their theology.

Such are the causes which brought me into the Lecture-room. I did not neglect serving YOU, while I seemed only to instruct other men; for every friend I made in Pennsylvania or Wisconsin became an auxiliary in that great cause, so dear to you and me. Nay, I did not abandon my scholarly work while travelling and lecturing. The motion of the railroad cars gave a pleasing and not harmful stimulus to thought, and so helped me work out my difficult problems of many kinds. I always took a sack of books along with me, generally such as required little eyesight and much thought, and so was sure of good company; while travelling I could read and write all day long; but I would not advise others to do much of either; few bodies can endure the long-continued strain on eye and nerve. So, I lost little time, while I fancied I was doing a great and needful work.

When I first came before you to preach, carefully looking before and after, I was determined on my Purpose, and had a pretty distinct conception of the Mode of Operation. It was not my design to found a sect, and merely build up a new ecclesiastical institution, but to produce a healthy development of the highest faculties of men, to furnish them the greatest possible amount of most needed instruction, and help them each to free spiritual individuality. The church,

the state, the community, were not Ends, a finality of purpose, but Means to bring forth and bring up individual men. To accomplish this purpose, I aimed distinctly at two things: First, to produce the greatest possible healthy development of the Religious Faculty, acting in harmonious connection with the intellectual, moral, and affectional; and second, to lead you to help others in the same work. Let me say a word in detail of each part of my design.

I. According both to my experience and observation, the Religious Element is the strongest in the spiritual constitution of man, easily controlling all the rest for his good or ill. I wished to educate this faculty under the influence of the true Idea of God, of Man, and of their mutual Relation. I was not content with producing Morality alone, — the normal action of the Conscience and Will, the voluntative keeping of the Natural Law of Right: I saw the need also of Piety, — religious feeling toward the Divine, that instinctive, purely internal love of God, which, I think, is not dependent on conscience. I was led to this aim partly by my own disposition, which, I confess, naturally inclined me to spontaneous pious feeling, my only youthful luxury, more than to voluntary moral action; partly by my early culture, which had given me much experience of religious emotions; and partly, also, by my wide and familiar acquaintance

with the mystical writers, the voluptuaries of the soul, who dwelt in the world of pious feeling, heedless of life's practical duties, and caring little for science, literature, justice, or the dear charities of common life.

I count it a great good fortune that I was bred among religious Unitarians, and thereby escaped so much superstition. But I felt early that the "liberal" ministers did not do justice to simple religious feeling; to me their preaching seemed to relate too much to outward things, not enough to the inward pious life; their prayers felt cold; but certainly they preached the importance and the religious value of Morality as no sect, I think, had done before. Good works, the test of true Religion, noble character, the proof of salvation, if not spoken, were yet implied in their sermons, spite of their inconsistent and traditionary talk about "Atonement," "Redeemer," "Salvation by Christ," and their frequent resort to other pieces of damaged phraseology. The effect of this predominant Morality was soon apparent. In Massachusetts, the head-quarters of the Unitarians, not only did they gather most of the eminent intellect into their ranks, the original talent and genius of the most intellectual of the States, but also a very large proportion of its moral talent and moral genius, most of the eminent conscience and philanthropy. Leaving out of sight pecuniary gifts for theological and denom-

inational purposes, which come from peculiar and well-known motives, where the Trinitarians are professedly superior, I think it will be found that all the great moral and philanthropic movements in the State—social, ecclesiastical, and political—from 1800 to 1840, have been chiefly begun and conducted by the Unitarians. Even in the Anti-Slavery enterprise, the most profound, unrespectable, and unpopular of them all, you are surprised to see how many Unitarians—even ministers, a timid race—have permanently taken an active and influential part. The Unitarians certainly once had this moral superiority, before the free, young, and growing party became a Sect, hide-bound, bridled with its creed, harnessed to an old, lumbering, and crazy chariot, urged with sharp goads by near-sighted drivers, along the dusty and broken pavement of tradition, noisy and shouting, but going nowhere.

But yet, while they had this great practical excellence, so obvious once, I thought they lacked the deep, internal feeling of piety, which alone could make it lasting: certainly they had not that most joyous of all delights. This fact seemed clear in their sermons, their prayers, and even in the hymns they made, borrowed, or "adapted." Most powerfully preaching to the Understanding, the Conscience and the Will, the cry was ever, "Duty, Duty! Work, Work!" They failed to address with equal power,

the Soul, and did not also shout, "Joy, Joy! Delight, Delight!" "Rejoice in God always, and again I say unto you, rejoice!" Their vessels were full of water: it was all laboriously pumped up from deep wells; it did not gush out, leaping from the great Spring, that is indeed on the surface of the sloping ground, feeding the little streams that run among the hills, and both quenching the wild asses' thirst and watering also the meadows newly mown, but which yet comes from the Rock of Ages, and is pressed out by the cloud-compelling mountains that rest thereon. — yes, by the gravitation of the earth itself.

This defect of the Unitarians was a profound one. Not actually, nor consciously, but by the logic of their conduct, they had broke with the old ecclesiastic Supernaturalism, that with its whip of fear yet compelled a certain direct, though perverted, action of the simple religious element in the Trinitarians: ceasing to fear "the great and dreadful God" of the Old Testament, they had not quite learned to love the All-Beautiful and Altogether Lovely of the Universe. But in general they had no theory which justified a more emotional experience of religion. Their philosophy, with many excellences, was sure of no great Spiritual Truth. To their metaphysics Eternal Life was only probable: the great argument for it came not from the Substance of Human Nature,

only from an Accident in the personal History of a single man; its proof was not *intuitive*, from the primal instincts of mankind; nor *deductive*, from the nature of God; nor yet *inductive*, from the general phenomena of the two-fold Universe; it was only *inferential*, from the "Resurrection of Christ"—an exceptional fact, without parallel in the story of the race, and that resting on no evidence! Nay, in their chief periodical, when it represented only the opinions of the leaders of the sect, one of their most popular and powerful writers declared the existence of a God was not a certainty of metaphysical demonstration, nor even a fact of consciousness. So this great primal Truth, fundamental to all forms of religion, has neither an objective, necessary and ontological root in the metaphysics of the universe, nor yet a mere subjective, contingent and psychological root in the consciousness of John and Jane, but, like the existence of "phlogiston" and "the celestial æther" of the interstellar spaces, it is a matter of conjecture, of inference from observed facts purely external and contingent; or, like the existence of the "Devil," is wholly dependent on the "miraculous and infallible revelation." Surely, a party with no better philosophy, and yet rejecting instinct for guide, breaking with the supernatural tradition at the Trinity, its most important link, could not produce a deep and continuous action of the religious element

in the mass of its members, when left individually free; nor when organized into a sect, with the discipline of a close corporation, could it continue to advance, or even to hold its own, and live long on its "Statement of Reasons for not believing the Trinity." Exceptional men—like Henry Ware, Jr., who leaned strongly towards the old supernaturalism, or like Dr. Channing, whose deeper reflection or reading supplied him with a more spiritual philosophy—might escape the misfortune of their party; but the majority must follow the logic of their principle. The leaders of the sect, their distinctive creed only a denial, always trembling before the Orthodox, rejected the ablest, original talent born among them; nay, sometimes scornfully repudiated original genius, each offering a more spiritual philosophy, which they mocked at as "transcendental," and turned off to the noisy road of other sects, not grateful to feet trained in paths more natural. After denying the Trinity, and the Deity of Christ, they did not dare affirm the Humanity of Jesus, the Naturalness of Religion to man, the actual or possible Universality of Inspiration, and declare that Man is not amenable to ecclesiastic authority, either the oral Roman Tradition, or the written Hebrew and Greek Scriptures; but naturally communing with God, through many faculties, by many elements, has in himself the Divine Well of Water, springing up full of Everlasting Life, and sparkling

with Eternal Truth, and so enjoys continuous revelation.

Alas! after many a venturous and profitable cruise, while in sight of port, the winds all fair, the little Unitarian bark, o'ermastered by its doubts and fears, reverses its course, and sails into dark, stormy seas, where no such craft can live. Some of the fragments of the wreck will be borne by oceanic currents where they will be used by the party of progress to help build more sea-worthy ships; whilst others, when water-logged, will be picked up by the great Orthodox fleet, to be kiln-dried in a revival, and then serve as moist, poor fuel for its culinary fires. It is a dismal fault in a religious party, this lack of Piety, and dismally have the Unitarians answered it; yet let their great merits and services be not forgot.

I found this lack of the emotional part of religion affected many of the Reformers. Some men called by that name, were indeed mere selfish tongues, their only business to find fault and make a noise; such are entitled to no more regard than other common and notorious scolds. But in general, the leading Reformers are men of large intellect, of profound morality, earnest, affectional men, full of philanthropy, and living lives worthy of the best ages of humanity. But as a general thing, it seemed to me they had not a proportionate development of the religious feelings, and so had neither the most powerful solace for their

many griefs, nor the profoundest joy which is needful to hold them up mid all they see and suffer from. They, too, commonly shared this sensational philosophy, and broke with the ecclesiastic Supernaturalism which once helped supply its defects.

Gradually coming to understand this state of things, quite early in my ministry I tried to remedy it; of course I did the work at first feebly and poorly. I preached Piety, unselfish love towards God, as well as Morality, the keeping of his Natural Law, and Philanthropy, the helping of his human children. And I was greatly delighted to find that my Discourses of Piety were as acceptable as my Sermons of Justice and Charity, touching the souls of earnest men. Nay, the more spiritual of the ministers asked me to preach such matters in their pulpits, which I did gladly.

You have broken with the traditions of the various churches whence you have come out, and turned your attention to many of the evils of the day; when I became your minister, I feared lest, in a general disgust at ecclesiastical proceedings, you should abandon this very innermost of all true religion; so I have taken special pains to show that well-proportioned Piety is the ground of all manly excellence, and though it may exist, and often does, without the man's knowing it, yet, in its highest form, he is conscious of it. On this theme I have preached many

sermons, which were very dear to me, though perhaps none of them has yet been published. But coming amongst you with some ministerial experience, and much study of the effect of doctrines, and ecclesiastical modes of procedure, I endeavored to guard against the vices which so often attend the culture of this sentimental part of religion, and to prevent the fatal degeneracy that often attends it. When the religious element is actively excited under the control of the false theological ideas now so prevailing, it often takes one or both of these two misdirections:

1. It tends to an unnatural Mysticism, which dries up all the noble emotions that else would produce a great useful character. The delicate and refined woman develops the sentiment of religion in her consciousness: surrounded by wealth, and seduced by its charms, she reads the more unpractical parts of the Bible, especially the Johannic writings, the Song of Solomon, and the more sentimental portions of the Psalms; studies Thomas à Kempis, Guyon, Fenelon, William Law, Keble; pores over the mystic meditations of St. Augustine and Bernard; she kneels before her costly *Prie-Dieu*, or other sufficient altar, pours out her prayers, falls into an ecstasy of devout feeling, and, elegantly dishevelled like a Magdalen, weeps most delicious tears. Then rising thence, she folds her idle, unreligious hands, and, with voluptuous scorn, turns off from the homely duties of common

life; while, not only the poor, the sick, the ignorant, the drunken, the enslaved and the abandoned, are left uncared for, but her own household is neglected, her husband, her very children, go unblessed. She lives a life of intense religious emotion in private, but of intense selfishness at home, and profligate worldliness abroad. Her pious feeling is only moonshine; nay, it is a Will-o'-the-wisp, a wandering fire, which

"Leads to bewilder, and dazzles to blind."

She is a voluptuary of the Soul, often likewise in the senses; her prayers are worth no more than so much novel-reading; she might as well applaud Don Giovanni with her laugh at the opera, as St. John with her tears at church. This woman's religion is internal glitter, which gives nor light nor heat. "Like a fly in the heart of an apple, she dwells in perpetual sweetness," but also in perpetual sloth, a selfish wanton of the soul. In his *Parc aux cerfs*, Louis XV. trained his maiden victims to this form of devotion!

2. It leads to ecclesiastical Ritualism. This is the more common form in New England, especially in hard men and women. They join a church, and crowd the ecclesiastical meetings. Bodily presence there is thought a virtue; they keep the Sunday severely idle; their ecclesiastical decorum is awful as a winter's night at the North Pole of cold; with terrible punctuality they attend to the ordinance of bread

and wine, looking grim and senseless as the death's head on the tombstones close by. Their babies are sprinkled with water, or themselves plunged all over in it; they have morning prayers and evening prayers, grace before meat, and after meat, grace; nay, they give money for the theological purposes of their sect, and religiously hate men not of their household of faith. Their pious feeling has spent itself in secreting this abnormal shell of ritualism, which now cumbers them worse than Saul's great armor on the stripling shepherd lad. What can such Pachyderms of the Church accomplish that is good, with such an elephantiasis to swell, and bark, and totter every limb? Their religious feeling runs to shell, and has no other influence. They sell rum, and trade in slaves or coolies. They are remorseless creditors, unscrupulous debtors; they devour widow's houses. Vain are the cries of Humanity in such ears, stuffed with condensed wind. Their lives are little, dirty, and mean.

Mindful of these two vices, which are both diseases of the misdirected soul, and early aware that Devoutness is by no means the highest expression of love for God, I have attempted not only to produce a normal development of religious feeling, but to give it the normal direction to the homely duties of common life, in the kitchen, the parlor, nursery, school-room, in the field, market, office, shop, or ship, or street, or wherever the lines of our lot have fallen to us; and

to the "primal virtues," that shine aloft as stars which mariners catch glimpses of mid ocean's rack, and learn their course, and steer straight in to their desired haven; and also, to the "charities that soothe, and heal, and bless," and which are scattered at mankind's feet like flowers, each one a beauty the bee sucks honey from, and a seed to sow the world with wholesome loveliness; — for it is plain to me that the common duties of natural life are both the best school for the development of piety, and the best field for its exercise when grown to manly size.

II. Partly for your education in true religion, and partly to promote the welfare of your brother man, I have preached much on the great Social Duties of your time and place, recommending not only "palliative Charity," but still more "remedial Justice." So I have not only preached on the private Individual Virtues, which are, and ought to be, the most constant theme of all pulpits, but likewise, on the public Social Virtues, that are also indispensable to the general welfare. This work brought me into direct relation with the chief social evils of our day. In treating these matters I have proceeded with much caution, beginning my attack a great ways off. First of all, I endeavored to establish philosophically the Moral Principle I should appeal to, and show its origin in the Constitution of Man, to lay down the Natural

Law so plain that all might acknowledge and accept it; next I attempted to show what Welfare had followed in human history from keeping this law, and what Misery from violating it; then I applied this moral principle of nature and the actual experience of history to the special public vice I wished to whelm over. Such a process may seem slow; I think it is the only one sure of permanent good effects. In this manner I have treated several prominent evils.

1. I have preached against Intemperance, showing the monstrous evil of Drunkenness, the material and moral ruin it works so widely. My first offence in preaching came when I first spoke on the misery occasioned by this ghastly vice. The victims of it sat before me, and were in great wrath; they never forgave me. Yet, I have not accepted the opinion of the leading temperance men, that the use of intoxicating drinks is in itself a moral or a physical evil. I found they had not only a medical, but also a dietetic use to serve, and in all stages of development above the savage, man resorts to some sort of stimulus as food for the nervous system: for a practice so nearly universal, I suppose there must be a cause in man's natural relation to the world of matter. Accordingly, I do not like the present legal mode of treating the vice, thinking it rests on a false principle which will not long work well; yet public

opinion, now setting strong against this beastly vice, required the experiment, which could never be tried under better auspices than now. But I have gladly joined with all men to help put down this frightful vice, which more than any other concrete cause hinders the welfare and progress of the working people of the North. It was the first public social evil I ever attacked. I have not ceased to warn old and young against this monstrous and ugly sin, and to call on the appointed magistrates to use all their official power to end so fatal a mischief. In a great trading town, of course such calls are vain; the Interest of the Few is against the Virtue of the People.

2. I have preached against Covetousness, — the abnormal desire of accumulating property. In the Northern States our civilization is based on respect for industry in both forms, Toil and Thought. Property is the product of the two: it is human power over Nature, to make the material forces of the world supply the wants of man; its amount is always the test of civilization. Our political and social institutions do not favor the accumulation of wealth in a few men or a few families; no permanent entails are allowed; it follows the natural laws of distribution amongst all the owner's children, or according to his personal caprice; in a few generations a great estate is widely scattered abroad. But as we have

no hereditary honors, office, or even title, and as wealth is all the parent can bequeath his child, it becomes not only a material power, but also a social distinction — the only one transmissible from sire to son. So wealth, and not birth from famous ancestors, is the thing most coveted; the stamp of the all-mighty dollar is the mark of social distinction; science may be accounted folly, and genius madness, in the paved or the furrowed town, but money is power in each. American "Aristocracy" rests on this movable basis; it is Plutocracy: every poor white boy may hope to trundle its golden wheels on to his little patch of ground, for the Millionnaire is not born, but self-made. Hence comes an intense desire of riches; a great amount of practical talent goes out in quest thereof. Beside its intrinsic character, respect for money is in America what loyalty to the crown and deference to feudal superiors is in England: "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib," and the Americans the millionnaire, the highest product of plutocracy.

Now on the whole, I do not find this desire of property excessive in the people of the North. I would greaten rather than lessen it, for it is the motive of our general enterprise, the proximate cause of much of our welfare and success. No nation was ever too well fed, housed, clad, adorned and comforted in general: poverty, subordination to material

want, is still the great concrete barrier to civilization; "the nations of the world *must*" think chiefly of what they shall eat and drink, and wherewithal be clothed. In this generation, the productive industry of New England seems vulgar to careless eyes, and excessive to severe ones; but it is yet laying the material and indispensable foundation for a spiritual civilization in some future age, more grand, I think, than mankind has hitherto rejoiced in. For not only will the People's property be greater in proportion to their number — their power to feed, clothe, house, adorn and comfort themselves, — but it will be more widely distributed, consequently directed with more wisdom and humanity, and so bring forth and develop both more and higher talents. I have advised all men to shun poverty; to seek a generous competence for themselves and their dependents, and that too by honest work, earning all they take. I see that a great fortune, thus acquired, may now be a nobler honor than all the red laurels of Nelson or Wellington, as well as a power of use and beauty for time to come. I honor the manly, self-denying enterprise which starts with no heritage but itself, and honestly earns a great estate. The man who makes a schoolbook like Colburn's "First Lessons in Arithmetic," or invents a labor-saving contrivance like the sewing machine, or the reaping and thrashing machines, or who by trade develops the resources of the country,

deserves a pay proportionate to his service. A Boston merchant died in 1847, who had so helped turn the rivers of New England into spinners and weavers, that I think he earned millions of dollars more than he received. If a man fully pay in efficient, productive toil and thought, he is entitled to all he gets, one dollar or many million dollars; he earns his riches, gives equivalent for equivalent — for all honest traffic is but actual barter, mutual exchange of my work and your work, — and if his estate be but what he has thus actually and honestly paid for with a service given, equivalent to the service received, what he can virtuously keep or humanely apply and expend, then it will never be too large.

But Covetousness — the lust after property already created; the dishonest desire to get wealth without paying for it with proportionate service by toil and thought; the wish to hoard it as the chief object in life, holding for no generous use; to expend it in personal luxury, making man a delicate swine to eat and drink beyond the needs of generous nature, a butterfly to glitter in the public sun, or before the private stars of fashion, a sloth, to lie idle and deform the ground; or to exhibit it for ostentation, fostering an unwieldy self-esteem or more disgraceful vanity, — this is a vice I have warned men against continually: I began early. It is a popular and most respectable offence, often counted a virtue. It

assumes many forms, now terrible and then ridiculous. I have dealt with it accordingly, now exposing its injustice or its folly, now satirizing its vulgar indecency, now showing that the ill-bred children of men grossly rich come to a fate no better than the sons and daughters of the grossly poor; that voluntary beggars in ruffles and voluntary beggars in rags, are alike supported at the public cost, paying nothing for what they take, and so should be objects of contempt in a world where he is greatest, who does the most and best.

I have often spoken of the tyranny of the rich over the thriving and the poor, — our Country, State, and Town, all furnishing grievous examples of the fact. "As the lion eateth up the wild ass in the wilderness, so the rich eateth up the poor," is as true now in New England as two thousand years ago in Egypt. But when I have seen a man with large talents for business helping others while he helped himself, enriching his workmen, promoting their education, their virtue and self-respect, I have taken special delight in honoring such an act of practical humanity. Happily we need not go out of Boston to find examples of this rare philanthropy.

3. As I was a schoolmaster at seventeen, though more from necessity than early fitness, I fear, and chairman of a town school committee at twenty-two, I have naturally felt much interest in the Education

of the people, and have often preached thereon. But I have seen the great defect of our culture, both in public and private schools; our education is almost entirely intellectual, not also moral, affectional, and religious. The Sunday-Schools by no means remedy this evil, or attempt to mend it; they smartly exercise the devotional feelings, accustom their pupils to a certain ritualism, which is destined only to serve ecclesiastical, and not humane purposes; they teach some moral precepts of great value; but their chief function is to communicate theological doctrine, based on the alleged supernatural revelation, and confirmed by miracles, which often confound the intellect, and befool the conscience. They do not even attempt any development of the higher faculties to an original activity at all commensurate with the vigorous action of the understanding. In the Public Schools there are sometimes devotional exercises, good in themselves, but little pains is directly taken to educate or even instruct the deeper faculties of our nature. The evil seems to increase, for of late years many of the reading-books of our public and private schools seem to have been compiled by men with only the desire of gain for their motive, who have rejected those pieces of prose or poetry which appeal to what is deepest in human nature, rouse indignation against successful wrong, and fill the child with generous sentiments and great ideas. Sunday-School books seem yet

worse, so loaded with the superstitions of the sects. The heroism of this age finds no voice nor language in our Schools.

But this lack of morality in our schemes of culture appears most eminent in the Superior Education, in colleges and other costly seminaries for maids and men. The higher you go up in the scale of institutions, the less proportionate pains is taken with the development of conscience, the affections, and the soul; in the dame school for infants, something is done to make the child "a good boy," or "a good girl," but almost nothing in the richest and most respectable colleges. They are commonly seats of an unprogressive and immoral Conservatism, where the studious youth may learn many an important discipline — mathematical, philological, scientific, literary, metaphysical, and theologic, — but is pretty sure to miss all effective instruction in the great art and science of personal or public Humanity. Hence our colleges are institutions not only to teach the mind, but also for the general *hunkerization* of young men; and a professor is there sometimes unscrupulously appointed whose nature and character make it notorious that his chief function must necessarily be to poison the waters of life, which young men, from generation to generation, will be compelled to bow down at, and drink! In the last forty years, I think no New England college, collective Faculty or pupils,

has shown sympathy with any of the great forward movements of mankind, which are indicated by some national outbreak, like the French Revolutions of 1830 or 1848!

From this fatal defect of our scheme of culture, it comes to pass that the class which has the superior education — ministers, professors, lawyers, doctors, and the like — is not only never a leader in any of the great humane movements of the age, where Justice, Philanthropy or Piety is the motive, but it continually retards all efforts to reform evil institutions, or otherwise directly increase the present welfare or the future progress of mankind. The scholars' culture has palsied their natural instincts of humanity, and gives them instead, neither the personal convictions of free, moral reflection, nor the traditional commands of church authority, but only the maxims of vulgar thrift, "get the most, and give the least; buy cheap, and sell dear!" Exceptional men, like Channing, Pierpont, Emerson, Ripley, Mann, Rantoul, Phillips, Sumner, and a few others, only confirm the general rule, that the educated is also a selfish class, morally not in advance of the mass of men. No thoughtful, innocent man, arraigned for treason, would like to put himself on the college, and be tried by a jury of twelve scholars; it were to trust in the prejudice and technic sophistry of a class, not to "put himself on the country," and be judged by the Moral Instincts of the people.

Knowing these facts—and I found them out pretty early—I have told them often in public, and shown the need of a thorough reform in our educational institutions. Still more have I preached on the necessity that YOU should do in private for your children what no school in this age is likely to attempt—secure such a great development of the moral, affectional, and religious powers, as shall preserve all the high instincts of nature, while it enriches every faculty by the information given. I need not now speak of what I had long since intended to do amongst you in this matter, when the opportunity should offer; for, alas, when it came, my power to serve you quickly went.

4. I have preached much on the Condition of Woman. I know the great, ineffaceable difference between the spiritual constitution of her and man, and the consequent difference in their individual, domestic and social functions. But, examining the matter both philosophically and historically, it seems clear that woman is man's equal, individually and socially entitled to the same rights. There is no conscious hostility or rivalry between the two, such as is often pretended; man naturally inclines to be a little more than just to her, she a little more than fair to him; a man would find most favor with a Jury of Women, as boys with nurses. But, certainly, her condition is sadly unfortunate; for, whether treated as

a Doll or Drudge, she is practically regarded as Man's inferior, intended by nature to be subordinate to him, subservient to his purposes; not a free spiritual individuality like him, but a dependent parasite or a commanded servant. This idea appears in all civilized legislation; and in the "revealed religion" of Jews and Christians, as well as in that of Brahmins and Mohammedans. Even in New England, no public provision is made to secure superior education for girls as for boys. Woman has no place in the superior industry, — shut out from the legal, clerical and medical professions, and the higher departments of trade, limited to domestic duties, and other callings which pay but little; when she does a man's service she has but half of his reward; no political rights are awarded to her; she is always taxed, but never represented. If married, her husband has legally an unnatural control over her property and her person, and, in case of separation, over her children. A young man with superior talents, born to no other heritage, can acquire wealth, or, unaided, obtain the best education this age makes possible to any one: but with a woman it is not so; if poor, she can only be enriched by marriage: hence mercantile wedlock is far more pardonable in her; no talents, no genius can secure a poor man's daughter her natural share in the high culture of the age. The condition of woman follows unavoidably from the popular idea, which she also shares often in

the heroic degree, that she is by nature inferior to man: prostitution and its half-known evils come from this as naturally as crime and drunkenness from squalid want — as plants from seeds.

I have preached the equivalency of man and woman, — that each in some particulars is inferior to the other, but, on the whole, Mankind and Womankind, though so diverse, are yet equal in their natural faculties; and have set forth the evils which come to both from her present inferior position, her exclusion from the high places of social or political trust. But I have thought she will generally prefer domestic to public functions, and have found no philosophic or historic argument for thinking she will ever incline much to the rough works of man, or take any considerable part in Republican politics; in a court like that of Louis XV., or Napoleon III., it might be different; but I have demanded that she should decide that question for herself, choose her own place of action, have her vote in all political matters, and be eligible to any office.

In special, I have urged on YOU the duty of attending to the education of young women, not only in accomplishments, — which are so often laborious in the process, only to be ridiculous in the display, and idle in their results, — but in the grave discipline of study, and for the practical duties of life. A woman voluntarily ignorant of household affairs and the man-

agement of a family, should be an object of pity or of contempt; while the women of New England incline to despise the indispensable labor of housekeeping, and can neither make wearable garments, nor eatable bread, I have sometimes doubted whether the men of New England, irritated with their sour fare, would think them quite fit to make laws for the State, or even for the Union. I have also called your attention to those most unfortunate outcasts, the Friendless Young Girls in the streets of your own City, the most abandoned of the Perishing Class, who will soon become the most harmful of the Dangerous Class— for prostitution is always two-fold, male as well as female damnation.

It is delightful to see the change now taking place in the popular idea of Woman, and the legislation of the Northern States. This reform at once will directly affect half the population, and soon also the other half. I am not alarmed at the evils which obviously attend this change, — the growing dislike of maternal duties, the increase of divorces, the false theories of marriage, and the unhappy conduct which thence results; all these are transient things, and will soon be gone — the noise and dust of the wagon that brings the harvest home.

5. The American people are making one of the most important experiments ever attempted on earth, endeavoring to establish an Industrial Democracy,

with the principle that all men are equal in their natural rights, which can be alienated only by the personal misconduct of their possessor: the great body of the People is the source of all political power, the maker of all laws, the ultimate arbiter of all measures; while the special magistrates, high and low, are but appointed agents, acting under the power of attorney the people intrusts them with. This experiment was perhaps never tried before, certainly not on so large a scale, and with so fair an opportunity for success; but wise men have always foretold its utter failure, and pointed to the past as confirming this prophecy. Certainly, we have Human History against us, but I think Human Nature is on our side, and find no reason to doubt the triumph of the American idea. So I have taken a deep interest in Politics, important not merely as representing the national House-keeping, but also the public Morality, and so tending to help or hinder the people's success. Never failing to vote, I have yet kept myself out of the harness of every party; responsible to none and for none, I have been free to blame or praise the Principles and the Purposes of all, their Measures and their Men. Addressing such multitudes, most of them younger than I, in times like the last fourteen years, when such important Interests came up for public adjudication, and when the great Principles of all national morality have been

solemnly denied by famous officials, men also of great personal power, who declared that human governments were amenable to no natural Law of God, but subject only to the Caprice of Magistrate or Elector, — I have felt a profound sense of my responsibility to YOU as a teacher of Religion. So I have preached many Political Sermons, examining the special Measures proposed, exposing the Principle they rested on, and the Consequences they must produce, and applying the lessons of experience, the laws of human nature, the great doctrines of Absolute Religion to the special conduct of the American People. No doubt, I have often wounded the feelings of many of YOU. Pardon me, my friends! if I live long I doubt not I shall do so again and again. YOU never made me your minister to flatter, or merely to please, but to instruct and serve.

Treating of politics, I must speak of the conspicuous men engaged therein, when they come to die, for such are the idols of their respective parties. In America there are few objects of conventional respect — no permanent classes who are born to be reverenced; and as men love to look up and do homage to what seems superior, a man of vulgar greatness, who has more of the sort of talent all have much of, is sure to become an idol if he will but serve the passions of his worshippers: so with us, a great man of that stamp has a more irresponsible power than

elsewhere among civilized men; for he takes the place of king, noble and priest, and controls the public virtue more. The natural function of a great man is to help the little ones: by this test I have endeavored to try such as I must needs speak of. Not responsible for their vice or virtue, I have sought to represent them exactly as I found them, and that, too, without regard to the opinion of men, who only looked up and worshipped, not asking what. If I were an assayer of metals, I should feel bound to declare the character of the specimens brought before me, whether lead or silver; shall I be less faithful in my survey of a great man, "more precious than the fine gold of Ophir?" I am no flatterer, nor public liar-general; when such a one is wanted he is easily found, and may be had cheap; and I cannot treat great men like great babies. So, when I preached on Mr. Adams, who had done the cause of Freedom such great service, on General Taylor and Mr. Webster, I aimed to paint them exactly as they were, that their Virtues might teach us, and their Vices warn. Still further to promote the higher education of the people, and correct an idolatry as fatal as it is stupid, as dangerous to the public as it is immediately profitable to wily rhetoricians, I have prepared lectures on four great famous Americans — Franklin, Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. The last, however, was not delivered when my present illness laid me low. I

wished to daguerreotype these great, noble men, and place true pictures before the people.

Perhaps no part of my public labors has been condemned with more noise and violence than this attempt at historic truth. Certainly I did depart from the panegyrical custom of political and clerical eulogizers of the famous or the wealthy dead; but I have confidence enough in the People of the Northern States to believe they will prefer plain truth to the most rhetorical lies.

I have not quite disdained to turn your eyes to little, mean men, when set in high office, that you might get instruction from their folly or wickedness. So, when the chief magistrate of the City was notoriously the comrade of drunkards, and of the most infamous of humankind, and that of the State was celebrated chiefly for public and private lying, and both abused their office, to promote their own little purposes of mischief or of gain, debauching the public virtue, as well as wasting the People's money, — I did not fail to advertise the fact, that YOU at least might learn by the lesson which cost the public so dear.

6. I have preached against War, showing its enormous cost in money and men, and the havoc it makes of public and private virtue. A national occasion was not wanting; for, obedient to the whip of the Slave-power, which hag-rides the nation still,

the American Government—not the People, nor even Congress—plunged us into a wicked contest with Mexico, she clearly in the right, we notoriously in the wrong. I have often spoken against war, and tried to discourage that "excessive lust for land," that aggressive and invasive Spirit, which is characteristic of both the American and British People. It is clear that the strongest races will ultimately supplant the feebler, and take their place, as the strong grasses outroot the weak from the farmer's meadow. I complain not of this just Natural Law, which indeed pervades the Universe; but the work need not be done by violence, nor any form of wrong. So I have preached against the *fillibustering* of America, and the not less wicked *diplomatizing* and *soldiering* by which our parent across the sea accomplishes the same thing, though with even more harshness and cruelty.

Yet I have not preached the doctrine of the Non-Resistants, who never allow an individual to repel wrong by material violence; nor that of the Ultra-Peace men, who deny a nation's right to stave off an invader's wickedness with the People's bloody hand. The Wrathful Emotions are also an integral part of Humanity, and with both nations and individuals have an indispensable function to perform, that of self-defence, which, in the present state of civilization, must sometimes be with violence, even with shedding aggressive blood. It is against needless

and wicked wars — the vast majority are such — that I have preached; against the abuse ambitious rulers make of the soldier's trained art to kill, and of the wrathful, defensive instincts of the multitude. In this age, I think the People do not make war against the peaceful People of another land; nay, in New England, the most democratic country, we have too much neglected the military art, I fear,—a mistake we may bitterly regret in that strife between the Southern Habit of Despotism, and the Northern Principle of Democracy, which any day may take the form of civil war, and one day must. For America will not always attempt to carry a pitcher of poison on her left shoulder, and one of pure water on her right; one or the other must soon go to the ground.

7. I have spoken against Slavery more than any concrete wrong, because it is the greatest of all, "the sum of all villanies," and the most popular, the wanton darling of the Government. I became acquainted with it in my early childhood, and learned to hate it even then, when, though I might not comprehend the injustice of the principle, I could yet feel the cruelty of the fact. I began to preach against it early, but used the greatest circumspection, for I knew the vulgar prejudice in favor of all successful tyranny, and wished my few hearers thoroughly to accept the principle of Justice, and apply it to this as to all wrongs. But even in the little Meeting-House

at West Roxbury, though some of the audience required no teaching in this matter, the very mention of American Slavery as wicked at first offended all my hearers who had any connection with the "Democratic" Party. Some said they could see no odds between claiming freedom for a negro slave, and "stealing one of our oxen," the right to own cattle including the right to own men; they thought Slavery could ride behind them on the same pillion with "Democracy," according to the custom of their masters. But, as little by little I developed the principle of true Democracy, showing its root in that Love of your Neighbor as yourself, which Jesus both taught and lived, and of that Eternal Justice which comes even to savage bosoms, and showed how repugnant slavery is to both, — gradually all the more reflective and humane drew over to the side of Freedom; and they who at first turned their faces to the floor of their pews when I announced Slavery as the theme for that day's sermon, ere many years turned on me eyes flashing with indignation against wrong, when I told the tale of our national wickedness; they have since given me the heartiest sympathy in my humble efforts to moralize the opinions and practice of the People.

My Friends, — Since I have been your minister, I have preached much on this dreadful sin of the nation, which now threatens to be also its ruin; for,

while in my youth Slavery was admitted to be an Evil, commercially profitable, but morally wrong, an exceptional measure, which only the necessity of habit might excuse, but which nothing could justify,— of late years it is declared a "Moral good," "the least objectionable form of labor," fit for Northern Whites not less than African Negroes, one of those guide-board instances which indicate the highway of national welfare. For some years Slavery has been the actual First Principle of each Federal Administration; to this all interests must bend, all customs and statutes conform, and the nation's two great documents, containing our programme of political Principles and of political Purposes, must be repudiated and practically annulled: the Supreme Court has become only the Jesuitical Propaganda of Slavery.

For some years, while busied with theological matters, and with laying the metaphysic foundation of my own scheme, I took no public part in the anti-slavery movements outside of my own little village. But when I became your minister and had a wider field to till, when the ambition of the Slave Power became more insolent by what it fed upon, and the North still tamer and more servile under the bridle and the whip of such as were horsed thereon, a different duty seemed quite clear to me. I have seldom entered your pulpit without remembering that you and I lived in a land whose Church-members are not more numer-

ous than its Slaves, as many "communing with God" by bread and wine, so many communing with Man by chains and whips; and that not only the State, Press, and Market, but also the Church takes a "South-side view of Slavery," as indeed she does of each other wickedness presently popular, and "of good report!" Since 1845, I have preached against all the great invasive measures of the Slave Power, exposing their Motive, the First Principle they refer to, and showing that they are utterly hostile to that Democracy which is Justice; and all tend to establish a Despotism, which at first may be industrial and many-headed, as now in Louisiana, but next must be single-headed and military, as already in France, and finally must lead to national ruin, as in so many countries of the old world.

In due time the Fugitive Slave Bill came up from seed which wicked men had sown and harrowed into the Northern soil; Boston fired her hundred cannons with delight, and they awoke the ministers, sitting drowsy in their Churches of Commerce, mid all the pavements of the North, who thought an angel had spoke to them. Then I preached against Slavery as never before, and defied the impudent statute, whereto you happily said *Amen* by the first clapping of hands which for years had welcomed a sermon in Boston; how could you help the natural indecorum? When, roused by these jubilant guns, one minister, so gener-

ous and self-devoted, too, in many a noble work, called on his parishioners to enforce that wicked act, which meant to kidnap mine, and declared that if a fugitive sought shelter with him he would drive him away from his own door; when another uttered words more notorious, and yet more flagrant with avaricious inhumanity, which I care not now to repeat again; and when the cry, "No Higher Law!" went down from the Market, and, intoned by the doctorial leaders of the sects, rang through so many Commercial Churches throughout the Northern land, — I did not dare refuse to proclaim the monstrous fact as one of the unavoidable effects of Slavery, whose evil seed must bear fruit after its kind, and to gibbet the wrong before the eyes of the People, to whom I appealed for common Justice and common Humanity. When two men, holding mean offices under the Federal Government, one of them not fit by nature to do a cruel deed, actually stole and kidnapped two innocent inhabitants out from your city of Franklin, and Hancock, and Adams, and attempted, with their unclean, ravenous jaws, to seize yet others, and rend the manhood out of them, — I preached against these Jackals of Slavery and their unhuman work; and have now only to lament that my powers of thought and speech were no more adequate fitly to expose the dark infamy of that foul deed, against which I asked alike the People's Justice and their Wrath; I knew

I should not ask in vain. And when a drunken Bully from South Carolina, in Congress, fitly representing the First Principle, if not the first persons of his State,—where none can serve in even the Lower House of Assembly, "unless he be seized in his own right of ten Negro Slaves,"—made his assault, not less cowardly than brutal, on our noble Senator, wounding him with worse than death, and while the United States Attorney sought "to make murder safe and easy in the Capital," not dreaming it would one day, unpunished, reach his own heart,—I spoke of that matter, and showed it was the cowards of Massachusetts who drew the blow on her faithful champion, and that no "anodyne" could make them less than glad that it was struck!

But why speak more of those sad days? Others may come with sterner face, not black, but red! However, a blessed change in public opinion now goes calmly on in Massachusetts, in New England, and all the North, spite of the sophistry and cunning of ambitious men smit with the presidential fever. The death of a dozen leading anti-slavery men to-day would not much retard it, for the ground is full of such!

8. But I have preached against the Errors of the Ecclesiastic Theology more than upon any other form of wrong, for they are the most fatal mischiefs in the land. The theological notion of God, Man, and

the Relation between them, seems to me the greatest speculative error Mankind has fallen into. Its gloomy consequences appear:—Christendom takes the Bible for God's word, His last word; nothing new or different can ever be expected from the Source of all Truth, all Justice, and all Love; the Sun of Righteousness will give no added light or heat on the cold darkness of the human world. From portions of this "infallible revelation," the Roman church logically derives its despotic and hideous claim to bind and loose on earth, to honor dead men with sainthood, or to rack and burn with all the engines mechanic fancy can invent, or priestly cruelty apply; and hereafter to bless eternally, or else forever damn. Hence, both Protestant and Catholic logically derive their imperfect, wrathful Deity, who creates men to torment them in an endless hell, "paved with the skulls of infants not a span long," whereinto the vast majority of men are, by the million, trodden down for everlasting agony, at which the Elect continually rejoice. Hence, they derive their Devil, absolutely evil, that Ugly Wolf whom God lets loose into his fold of lambs; hence, their Total Depravity, and many another dreadful doctrine which now the best of men blind their brothers' eyes withal, and teach their children to distrust the Infinite Perfection, which is Nature's God, dear Father and Mother to all that is. Hence,

clerical skeptics learn to deny the validity of their own superior faculties, and spin out the cobwebs of sophistry, wherewith they surround the field of religion, and catch therein unwary men. Hence, the Jews, the Mohammedans, the Mormons, draw their idea of woman, and their right to substitute such gross conjunctions for the natural marriage of one to one. There the slaveholder finds the chief argument for his ownership of men, and in Africa or New England, kidnaps the weak, his mouth drooling with texts from "the authentic Word of God;" nay, there the rhetorician finds reason for shooting an innocent man who but righteously seeks that freedom which Nature declares the common birthright of mankind. It has grieved me tenderly to see all Christendom make the Bible its Fetish, and so lose the priceless value of that free religious spirit, which, communing at first hand with God, wrote its grand pages, or poured out its magnificent beatitudes.

Christendom contains the most intellectual nations of the earth, all of them belonging to the dominant Caucasian race, and most of them occupying regions very friendly to the development of the highest faculties of man. Theirs too is the superior machinery of civilization, political, ecclesiastical, domestic, social. Nowhere on earth does the clerical class so connect itself with the innermost of man. Christendom is the bold leader in all intellectual affairs — arts of peace

and war, science, literature, skill to organize and administer mankind. But yet the Christian has no moral superiority over the Jews, the Mohammedans, the Brahmins, the Buddhists, at all commensurate with this intellectual power. In the sum of private and public virtues, the Turk is before the Christian Greek. For fifteen hundred years the Jews, a nation scattered and peeled, and exposed to most degrading influences, in true religion have been above the Christians! In temperance, chastity, honesty, justice, mercy, are the leading nations of Christendom before the South-Asiatics, the Chinese, the islanders at Japan? Perhaps so — but have these "Christians" a moral superiority over those "heathens" equal to their mental superiority? It is notorious they have not. Why is this so, when the Christians worship a man whose religion was Love to God and Love to men, and who would admit to Heaven only for righteousness, and send to Hell only for lack of it? Because they WORSHIP him, reject the natural goodness he relied upon, and trust in the "blood of Christ which maketh free from all sin." It is this false theology, with its vicarious atonement, salvation without morality or piety, only by belief in absurd doctrines, which has bewitched the leading nations of the earth into such practical mischief. A false Idea has controlled the strongest spiritual faculty, leading men to trust in "imputed righteousness," and under-

value personal virtue. Self-denying missionaries visit many a far-off land "to bring the heathens to Christ." Small good comes of it; but did they teach industry, thrift, letters, honesty, temperance, justice, mercy, with rational ideas of God and Man, what a conversion there would be of the Gentiles! Two and thirty thousand Christian ministers are there in the United States, all "consecrated to Christ;" many of them are able men, earnest and devoted, but, their eyes hood-winked, and their hands chained by their theology, what do they bring to pass? They scarce lessen any vice of the State, the Press, or the Market. They are to "save souls from the wrath of God."

I have preached against the Fundamental Errors of this well-compacted theologic scheme, showing the consequences which follow thence, and seldom entered your pulpit without remembering Slavery, the great sin of America, and these theological errors, the sacramental mistake of Christendom. But I have never forgotten the great Truths this theology contains, invaluable to the Intellect, the Conscience, the Heart and Soul. I have tried to preserve them all, with each good institution which the Church, floating over the ruins of an elder world, has borne across that deluge, and set down for us where the Dove of Peace has found rest for the sole of her foot, and gathered her olive-branch to show that those

devouring waters are dried up from the face of the earth. To me the name of Christianity is most exceeding dear, significant of so great a man, and of such natural Emotions, Ideas and Actions as are of priceless value to mankind. I know well the errors, also, of the doubters and deniers, who in all ages have waged war against the superstitious theology of their times, and pulled down what they could not replace with better. I have not sat in the seat of the scornful; and while I warned men against the snare of the priest, I would not suffer them to fall into the mocker's pit. I have taken exquisite delight in the grand words of the Bible, putting it before all other sacred literature of the whole ancient world; to me it is more dear when I regard them not as the miracles of God, but as the work of earnest men, who did their uttermost with holy heart. I love to read the great Truths of Religion set forth in the magnificent poetry of Psalmist and Prophet, and the humane lessons of the Hebrew peasant, who summed up the Prophets and the Law in one word of LOVE, and set forth man's daily duties in such true and simple speech! As a Master, the Bible were a tyrant; as a Help, I have not time to tell its worth; nor has a sick man speech for that, nor need I now, for my public and private teachings sufficiently abound in such attempts. But yet, to me the great men of the Bible are worth more than all their words; he that

was greater than the Temple, whose soul burst out its walls, is also greater than the Testament, but yet no Master over you or me, however humble men!

In theological matters, my preaching has been positive, much more than negative, controversial only to create; I have tried to set forth the Truths of Natural Religion, gathered from the world of matter and of spirit; I rely on these great Ideas as the chief means for exciting the religious Feelings, and promoting religious Deeds; I have destroyed only what seemed pernicious, and that I might build a better structure in its place.

Of late years a new form of Atheism — the ideal, once thought impossible — has sprung up; perhaps Germany is its birth-place, though France and England seem equally its home. It has its representatives in America. Besides, the Pantheists tell us of their God, who is but the sum total of the existing universe of matter and of mind, immanent in each, but transcending neither, imprisoned in the two; blind, planless, purposeless, without Consciousness, or Will, or Love; dependent upon the shifting phenomena of finite matter and of finite mind, finite itself; a continual Becoming this or that, not absolute Being, self-subsistent and eternally the same perfection: their God is only Law, the constant mode of operation of objective and unconscious force; yet is it better than the churchman's God, who is Caprice

alone, subjective, arbitrary, inconstant, and with more hate than love. I have attempted to deal with the problem of the Pantheist and the Atheist, treating both as any other theological opponents: I have not insulted them with harsh names, nor found occasion to impute dishonorable motives to such as deny what is dearer than life to me; nor attempted to silence them with texts from sacred books; nor to entangle them in ecclesiastic or metaphysic sophistries; nor to scare with panic terrors, easily excited in an atheistic or a Christian's heart. I have simply referred them to the primal Instincts of Human Nature, and their Spontaneous Intuition of the Divine, the Just, and the Immortal; then, to what science gathered from the World of Matter, and the objective History of Man in his progressive development of individual and of social power. I have shown the causes which lead to honest bigotry within the Christian Church, and to honest atheism without; I hope I have done injustice neither to this nor that. But it was a significant fact I could not fail to make public, that, while the chief Doctors of Commercial Divinity in the great American trading towns, and their subservient colleges, denied the Higher Law, and with their Bibles laid Humanity flat before the kidnappers in Cincinnati, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, the so-called Atheists and Pantheists o'er all the Northern land revered the instinctive Justice of the soul, and said,

"Thou shalt not steal, nor lie, Thou shalt do no wrong; 't is Nature self forbids!"

Preaching such doctrines in a place so public, and applying them to life, I am not surprised at the hostility I have met with from the various sects. In no country would it have been less, or tempered more sweetly; no, nor in any age; for certainly I have departed from the Fundamental Principle of the Catholics and the Protestants, denied the fact of a miraculous Revelation, given exclusively to Jews and Christians, denied the claim to supernatural authority, and utterly broke with that Vicariousness which puts an alleged revelation in place of common sense, and the blood of a crucified Jew instead of excellence of character. In the least historic of the New Testament Gospels it is related that Jesus miraculously removed the congenital blindness of an adult man, and because he made known the fact that his eyes were thus opened, and told the cause, the Pharisees cast him out of their synagogue. What this mythic story relates as an exceptional Measure of the Pharisees, seems to have founded a Universal Principle of the Christian Church, which cannot bear the presence of a man who, divinely sent, has washed in the pool of Siloam, and returned seeing and telling why.

I knew at the beginning what I must expect: that at first men younger than I, who had not learned over much, would taunt me with my youth; that others, not scholarly, would charge me with lack of learning competent for my task; and cautious old men, who did not find it convenient to deny my facts, or answer my arguments, would cry out, "this young man must be put down!" and set their venerable popular feet in that direction. Of course I have made many mistakes, and could not expect a theologic opponent, and still less a personal enemy, to point them out with much delicacy, or attempt to spare my feelings; theological warfare is not gentler than political or military; even small revolutions are not mixed with rose-water. The amount of honest misunderstanding, of wilful misrepresenting, of lying, and of malignant abuse, has not astonished me; after the first few months it did not grieve me; human nature has a wide margin of oscillation, and accommodates itself to both torrid and frigid zones. But I have sometimes been a little surprised at the boldness of some of my critics, whose mistakes proved their courage extended beyond their information. An acquaintance with the historic development of mankind, a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, familiarity with the metaphysic thought of the human race, is certainly no moral merit; but in theologic discussions it is a convenience which some of my opponents have not always paid

quite sufficient respect to, though they were not thereby hindered from passing swift judgment. Criticism is the easiest of all arts, or the most difficult of all.

It did not surprise me that other ministers, Unitarian and Trinitarian, should refuse to serve with me on the committee of a college or a school, to attend the same funeral or wedding, to sit on the same bench at a public meeting, to remain in the same public apartment, and trade at the same bookstore, to return my salutation in the street, or reply to my letters; that they should invent and spread abroad falsehoods intended to ruin me: but I confess I have sometimes been astonished that such men "could not see any sign of honesty, of love of truth, of philanthropy, or religion," in my writings or my life, but must set down all to "vanity and love of the praises of men." But "it is fit to be instructed, even by an enemy." Let you and me learn from ours to hate those theological doctrines which can so blind the eyes and harden the hearts of earnest, self-denying men; let us not imitate the sophistry and bigotry we may have suffered from, and certainly have been exposed to.

I have found most friendly recognition where I did not expect it. Men with adverse theological opinions have testified to the honest piety they thought they found in my writings, and joined with me in various practical works of humanity, leaving me to settle the

abstract questions of Divinity with the Divine himself. Indeed, I never found it necessary to agree with a man's theology before I could ride in his omnibus or buy his quills. No two Unitarian ministers, I think, differ more in their theology than Rev. James Freeman Clarke and I, but for twenty years there has been the warmest friendship between us; that noble man and I have gone hand in hand to many of the most important philanthropies of the age; and I think he will not be offended by this public recognition of our affectional intimacy. I could say similar things of other men, whom I have not named, but might thereby scare their timid reputation from its nest, and addle their hopes of future usefulness.

Besides, I have found kindly and generous critics in America, and still more in England and Germany, who did me perhaps more than Justice, while they honestly pointed out what they must regard as my faults. Though I have been written and spoken against more than any American, not connected with political parties, yet, on the whole, I do not complain of the treatment I have received; all I asked was a hearing; that has been abundantly granted. You opened wide doors, my opponents rung the bell all Saturday night, and Sunday morning the audience was there. I think no other country would allow me such liberty of speech; I fear not even England, which has yet so generously welcomed every free thought.

Of late years the hatred against me seems to have abated somewhat; old enemies relaxed their brows a little, and took back, or else denied, their former calumnies; nay, had kind words and kind deeds for me and mine. "Let bygones be bygones," is a good old rule.

> "The fondest, the fairest, the truest that met,
> Have still found the need to forgive and forget."

I think few men in America have found sympathy in trouble from a greater variety of persons than I, in my present disappointment and illness, from men and women of all manner of ecclesiastical connections. I could not always thank them by private letters, but I need not say how grateful their kindly words have been, for — I may as well confess it — after all, I am not much of a fighter; my affections are developed far better than my intellect. It may be news to the public; to YOU it is but too well known.

Yet, let it not surprise you that in some quarters this theologic odium continues still, and shows itself in "revival meetings" by public prayers that God would go to my study, and confound me there so that I could not write my sermon; or meet me in your pulpit, and put a hook in my jaws so that I could not speak; or else remove me out of the world. Such petitions, finding abundant biblical example,

are not surprising when they come from such places, on such occasions, and from men whose mind and conscience are darkened by the dreadful theology that still haunts many such places. But other instances must find a different explanation. Less than two years ago, the Senior class in the Cambridge Divinity School, consisting, I think, of but four pupils, invited me to deliver the customary address before them and the public, the Sunday before their graduation. The Theological Faculty, consisting of three Unitarian Doctors of Divinity, interposed their veto and forbid me from speaking; such a prohibition, I think, had never been made before. These Doctors were not ignorant men, or bigoted, they attend no "revival meetings," but, speaking intellectually, they belong among the most enlightened Scholars in America; none of them "was ever accused of believing too much;" yet they saw fit to offer me the greatest ecclesiastical, academical and personal insult in their professional power, in the most public manner, and that, too, at a time when I was just recovering from severe illness, and fluttering 'twixt life and death,— the scrutinizing physician telling me the chances were equally divided between the two; I could only stand in the pulpit to preach by holding on to the desk with one hand while I lifted the other up. Others might have expected such treatment from these men; I confess, my friends, that I did not.

Since my present illness began, some of my theological foes have, publicly to the world, and privately to me, expressed their delight that I am not likely to trouble them much longer; in my present feebleness they read the answer to their prayers for my removal. It was the Psalmist's petition, "Let not mine enemies triumph over me!" But I shall utter none such. If I fall and die, let "mine enemies" rejoice as much as they will at the consequent thought that there is one feeble voice the less, rebuking the vice of the Press, the State, the Market, and the Church, to speak a word for Truth, Freedom, Justice, and Natural Religion; let them be glad there is one weak arm the less reaching out help to the poor, the drunken, the ignorant, the harlot, the felon, and the slave; let them thank God for the premature decrepitude of my voice, the silence of my study, where worms perchance devour my books, more dear even than costly; let them find "answer to our prayers" in the sorrow of my personal friends — there are now many such, — in the keen distress of my intimates, and the agony of my wife: I complain nothing thereat. Every tree must bear after its own kind, not another, and their "religion" must yield such fruits. Let them triumph in these results, and thank their God that he has "interposed," and thus granted their petition; it is small satisfaction compared with what they hope

for in the next life, where, so their theology teaches, the joy of the Elect in Heaven will be enhanced by looking down into Hell, and beholding the agony of their former neighbors and friends, husband or wife, nay, their own children also, and remembering that such suffering is endless, "and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." Let them triumph in this; but let them expect no other or greater result to follow from my death. For to the success of the great truths I have taught, it is now but of the smallest consequence whether I preach in Boston and all the Lyceums of the North, or my body crumbles in some quiet, nameless grave. They are not MY Truths! I am no great man whom the world hinges on; nor can I settle the fate of a single doctrine by my authority. Humanity is rich in personalities, and a man no larger than I will not long be missed in the wide field of theology and religion. For immediately carrying a special measure, and for helping this or that, a single man is sometimes of great value; the death of the general is the loss of the battle, perhaps the undoing of a State; but after a great Truth of Humanity is once set agoing, it is in the charge of Mankind, through whom it first came from God; it cannot perish by any man's death. Neither State, nor Press, nor Market, nor Church, can ever put it down; it will drown the water men pour on it, and quench their

hostile fire. Cannot the Bible teach its worshippers that a Grave is no dungeon to shut up Truth in; and that Death, who slays alike the Priest and the Prophet, bows his head before her, and passes harmless by? To stone Stephen did not save the Church of the Pharisees. A live man may harm his own cause; a dead one cannot defile his clean immortal doctrines with unworthy hands.

In these tropic waters not far off, in time of strife, on a dark night, but towards morning, an English ship-of-war once drew near what seemed a hostile vessel under sail; she hailed the stranger, who answered not; then hailed again; no answer; then fired a shot across the saucy bows, but still there was no reply; next fired at her, amidships, but got not a word in return. Finally the man-of-war cleared for action, began battle in earnest, serving the guns with British vigor, but found no return, save the rattle of shot rebounding and falling back into the heedless sea. Daylight presently came with tropic suddenness, and the captain found he spent his powder in battering a great rock in the ocean! So, many a man has fought long against a Truth which he fancied was but a floating whim, bound to yield to his caprice; but, at last the dawning light has shown him it was no passing ship, of timber and cordage and canvas, driven by the wind and tossed by the undulations of the sea, but a SAIL-ROCK, resting on the foundations of the

world, and amenable neither to the men-of-war that sailed in the wind, nor yet to the undulation of the sea whereon they came and went. It is one thing to rejoice at the sickness and death of a short-lived heretic, but it is another and a little different, to alter the Constitution of the Universe, and put down a Fact of spontaneous Human Consciousness, which also is a Truth of God.

When I first came amongst you, and lived in a trading town where a great variety of occupations lay spread out before me all the time, and preached to such crowds of men as offered a wide diversity of nature, character and conduct, I found not only an opportunity to work, but also to learn and grow. You say I have taught you much; I hope it is so; but you have been a large part of your own schooling, for I have also learned much from you; the audience has always furnished a large part of the sermon and the prayer. I have received much direct instruction, and that in matters of deep concern, from some of you, by hearing your words and looking at your lives; the indirect help to my power of thought and speech, I fear you would hardly credit should I attempt to tell. It is enough to say now, that amongst you I have found men and women, often in quite humble stations, who have added new elements of both strength and beauty

to my notion of what constitutes a "glorious human creature," in particular excellences their Actual surpassing my Ideal. I have been a learner quite as much as a teacher; indeed, out of nearly a thousand sermons I have written, I think there are not five and twenty which are not also steps in my own development, studies I have learned by, quite as much as lessons you have been taught with.

To me, Human Life in all its forms, individual and aggregate, is a perpetual wonder: the Flora of the earth and sea is full of beauty and of mystery which Science seeks to understand; the Fauna of land and ocean is not less wonderful; the World which holds them both, and the great Universe that folds it in on every side, are still more wonderful, complex and attractive, to the contemplating mind. But the Universe of Human Life, with its peculiar worlds of outer sense and inner soul, the particular faunas and floras which therein find a home, are still more complex, wonderful and attractive; and the laws which control it seem to me more amazing than the Mathematic Principles that explain the Celestial Mechanics of the outward world. The Cosmos of Matter seems little compared to this Cosmos of immortal and progressive Man; it is my continual study, discipline and delight. Oh, that some young genius would devise the Novum Organum of Humanity, determine the Principia thereof, and with deeper than mathematic

science, write out the formulas of the Human Universe, the Celestial Mechanics of Mankind.

In your busy, bustling town, with its queerly mingled, heterogeneous population, and its great diversity of work, I soon learned to see the Unity of Human Life under all this variety of Circumstances and outward condition. It is easy for a simple-hearted man, standing on a central Truth, to reduce them all to one common denomination of Humanity, and ascertain the relative value of individuals in this Comparative Morality. The Huckster, with a basket, where apples, peanuts, candy, and other miscellaneous small stores are huddled together, is a small merchant; the Merchant, with his warehouse, his factory or bank, his ships on many a sea, is a great huckster; both buy to sell, and sell to gain; the odds is quantitative, not in kind, but bulk. The cunning Lawyer, selling his legal knowledge and forensic skill to promote a client's gainful wickedness; the tricksy Harlot, letting out her person to a stranger's unholy lust; the deceitful Minister, prostituting his voice and ecclesiastical position to make some popular sin appear decent and Christian, "accordant with the revealed Word of God," — all stand in the same column of my religious notation. In the street I see them all pass by, each walking in a vain show, in different directions, but all consilient to the same end!

So, the ambitious vanities of life all seem of nearly

the same value when laid side by side on this table of exchange. The Poetess, proud of her superiority over other "silly women" in the "vision and the faculty divine," or in but the small "accomplishment of verse;" the Orator, glorying in his wondrous art, longer than other men to hold the uplooking multitude with his thread of speech, and thereby pour his thought or will into the narrow vials of so many minds; and the Scavenger, who boasts that he "can sweep round a lamp-post better than any man in the gang,"—all seem alike to an eye that looks beneath and above the rippling tide of phenomenal actions, learning its whither and its whence, and knowing the unseen causes which control this many-billowed sea of life. The diamonds of many-skirted Empress Eugenia at Versailles, and the Attleborough jewelry of barefooted Char-woman Bridget at Cove Place, are symbols of the same significance, and probably of the same value to their respective occupants. The man not winged with talent, whom a political party cranes up to some official eminence he could not reach by the most assiduous crawling, and the dawdling young woman, who can make neither bread to eat nor clothes to wear, nor yet order any household even of only two, whom an idle hand, and a pinkish cheek, and a lolling tongue, have fastened to another, but bearded fool,— these seem wonderfully alike to me; and I say to both, "May God Almighty have mercy

on your souls!" So, the effort after nobleness of character is ever the same, clad in whatever dress; the black washerwoman, on Negro Hill, as, with a frowzy broom, a mop, and a tub or two, she keeps the wolf away from her unfathered babies, all fugitives from slavery, and thence looks up to that dear God whom she so feels within her heart a very present help in her hour of need, which is her every hour,— to me seems grand as Paul preaching on Mars-hill to the Athenian senators; nay, not less glorious than Jesus of Nazareth on his mountain, uttering blessed beatitudes to those thousands who paused in their pilgrimage towards Jerusalem, to look and listen to one greater than the Temple, and destined to control men's hearts when that city, compactly built, has not stone left on stone. The thoughtful eye, like the artistic hand, invests with the same magnificence the Hebrew preachers and the Negro washerwoman, borrowing the outward purple from the glory within. It is the same great problem of duty which is to be wrought out by all — huckster, merchant, lawyer, harlot, minister, poetess, orator, Eugenia, and Bridget, unworthy officer, and idle, helpless wife, Dinah on Negro Hill, Paul at the Areopagus, and Jesus on Mount Tabor; and it is not of such future consequence to us as men fancy, whether the tools of our work be a Basket or a Warehouse, a Mop or a Cross; for the Divine Justice asks the same question of each,

"What hast thou done with *thy* gifts and opportunities?" Feeling the democracy of Mankind, and preaching it in many a form, I have learned to estimate the worth of men by the Quality of their Character, and the Amount of their Service rendered to mankind. So, of each I ask but two questions, "What are you? What do you do?" The voluntary beggar in rags, and the voluntary beggar in ruffles, alike answer, "Nought."

In my preaching I have used plain, simple words, sometimes making what I could not find ready, and counted nothing unclean, because merely common. In philosophic terms, and in all which describes the inner consciousness, our Saxon speech is rather poor, and so I have been compelled to gather from the Greek or Roman stock forms of expression which do not grow on our homely and familiar tree, and hence, perhaps, have sometimes scared you with "words of learned length." But I have always preferred to use, when fit, the every-day words in which men think and talk, scold, make love, and pray, so that generous-hearted Philosophy, clad in a common dress, might more easily become familiar to plain-clad men. It is with customary tools that we work easiest and best, especially when use has made the handles smooth.

Illustrations I have drawn from most familiar things which are before all men's eyes, in the fields, the

streets, the shop, the kitchen, parlor, nursery or school; and from the literature best known to all, — the Bible, the newspapers, the transient speech of eminent men, the talk of common people in the streets, from popular stories, school-books and nursery rhymes. Some of you have censured me for this freedom and homeliness, alike in illustration and in forms of speech, desiring "more elegant and sonorous language," "illustrations derived from elevated and conspicuous objects," "from dignified personalities." A good man, who was a farmer in fair weather and a shoemaker in foul, could not bear to have a plough or a lap-stone mentioned in my sermon, — to me picturesque and poetic objects, as well as familiar, — but wanted "kings and knights," which I also quickly pleased him with. But for this I must not only plead the necessity of my nature, delighting in common things, trees, grass, oxen, and stars, moonlight on the water, the falling rain, the ducks and hens at this moment noisy under my window, the gambols and prattle of children, and the common work of blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, painters, hucksters and traders of all sorts; but I have also on my side the example of all the great masters of speech, — save only the French, who disdain all common things, as their aristocratic but elegant literature was bred in a court, though rudely cradled elsewhere, nay, born of rough loins, — of poets like Homer, Dante, Shake-

speare, Goethe, of Hebrew David, and of Roman Horace; of philosophers like Socrates and Locke; of preachers like Luther, Latimer, Barrow, Butler and South; nay, elegant Jeremy Taylor, "the Shakespeare of divines," owes half his beauty to these weeds of nature, which are choicest flowers when set in his artistic garden. But one need not go beyond Jesus of Nazareth and the first three Gospels to learn great lessons in the art of speech; for in him you not only reverence the Genius for Religion, which intuitively sees divine Truth and human Duty, but wonder also at the power of speech that tells its tale as deliverly as the blackbird sings or the water runs down hill. Besides, to me common life is full of poetry and pictorial loveliness; spontaneously portrayed, its events will fill my mind as one by one the stars come out upon the evening sky, like them each one "a beauty and a mystery." It is therefore a necessity of my nature that the sermon should publicly reflect to you what privately hangs over it with me, and the waters rained out of my sky when cloudy, should give back its ordinary stars when clear. Yet, for the same reason, I have also fetched illustrations from paths of literature and science, less familiar perhaps to most of you, when they, better than aught else, would clear a troubled thought; so, in my rosary of familiar beads, I have sometimes strung a pearl or two which Science brought from oceanic depths, or fixed thereon the

costly gems where ancient or modern Art has wrought devices dearer than the precious stone itself.

Using plain words and familiar illustrations, and preaching also on the greatest themes, I have not feared to treat philosophic matters with the rigor of science, and never thought I should scare you with statistic facts, which are the ultimate expression of a great principle doing its work by a constant mode of operation, nor by psychologic analysis, or metaphysical demonstration. Ministers told me I was "preaching over the heads of the people;" I only feared to preach below their feet, or else aside from their ears. Thus handling great themes before attentive men, I have also dared to treat them long, for I read the time not on the dial, but the audience. I trust you will pardon the offence, which I perhaps shall not repeat.

My Friends,— I said that in my early life I feared the temptations that beset the Lawyer's path, and, trembling at the moral ruin, which seemed so imminent, turned to the high ecclesiastic road. Alas! the peril is only different, not less. The lawyer is drawn to one kind of wickedness, the minister to another; their sophistry and cunning are about equal, only in the one case it is practised in the name of "Law," and for an obvious "worldly end," and in the other in the name of "Gospel," and professedly to secure

"Salvation." Learning to distinguish sound from significance, I have not found the moral tone of ministers higher than that of lawyers, their motives purer, their behavior more honest, or their humanity more prompt and wide, only their alms are greater in proportion to their purse. In choosing the clerical, not the legal profession, I think I encountered quite as much peculiar peril as I shunned. The Gospel-mill of the minister is managed with as much injustice as the Law-mill of the other profession.

It is not for me to say I have succeeded in keeping any portion of my youthful vow. Yet one thing I am sure of: I never appealed to a mean motive, nor used an argument I did not think both just and true; I have employed no conscious sophistry, nor ever disguised my ignorance.

Together we have tried some things, which did not prosper, and so came to an end.

We attempted Sunday afternoon meetings, for free discussion of what pertains to Religion. I hoped much good from that experiment; yet it was made not only a vanity, but also a vexation of spirit, by a few outsiders, who talked much, while they had little or nothing to say; there could be no wisdom where their voices were heard.

Next, we tried Lectures on the Bible, Sunday afternoons, which continued during the wintry half of

several years. I gave six general lectures on the Origin and History of the Old and New Testaments, and then turned to the Criticism and Interpretation of the several books of the latter. With Tischendorf's edition of the original text in my hand, I translated the three Synoptic Gospels, the four undoubted Epistles of Paul, the Acts, and the "Johannic" Writings — Revelation, Gospel, Epistles, — explaining each book, verse, and word, as well as I could. I intended to treat all the other Canonical and Apocryphal Books of the New and Old Testaments in the same way. But either the matter was too learned, or the manner too dull, for it did not succeed well, bringing a class of but a few scores of persons. This experiment was abandoned when we removed to the Music Hall, and had no place for an afternoon meeting.

I have long meditated other things, which might, perhaps, be helpful to select classes of young men and women; but as they are now not likely to be more than thoughts, I will not name them here.

Last year you organized your Fraternity; the movement was spontaneous on your part, not originating in any hint of mine. Though I had long wanted such an association, so various in its purposes, and so liberal in its plan, I did not venture to propose it, preferring it should come without my prompting in 1858, rather than merely by it ten years before. A

minister as sure of the confidence of his hearers as I am of yours, is often a little inclined to be invasive, and thrust his personality on that of his congregation, making his will take the place of their common sense; hence many trees of clerical planting fail, because they originate only with the minister, and root but into him. I hope great good from this Fraternity, and have laid out much work for myself to do with its help. To mention but one thing: I intended this season to deliver before it ten easy Lectures on the First Three Centuries of the Christian Era, and show how the Christianity of the Christians, alas! not the more humane and natural religion of Jesus, developed itself in Ideas — the doctrines of the Biblical and Patristic books; in Institutions — the special churches, each a Republic at first, with individual Variety of Action, but gradually degenerating into a Despotic Monarchy, with only ecclesiastical Unity of Action; and finally, after compromising with the Hebrew and Classic schemes, how it became the Organized Religion of the civilized world, a new force in it both for good and evil, the most powerful organization on earth. In my sleepless nights last Autumn, I sketched out the plan and arranged the chief details; but it must now pass away, like other less systematic visions of a sick man in his sleep.

When a young man, it was a part of my original plan to leave the practical work of continual preaching, a little before I should be fifty years old, and devote the residue of my life to publishing works which I hoped might be of permanent value, separating the two periods by a year or two of travel in the American Tropics and the Mediterranean countries of the Old World; so I thought I might be most useful to mankind, for I did not anticipate or desire long life, and did not originally rate very high my ability to affect the mass of men by direct word of mouth, and made no pretensions to that most popular of intellectual attainments, that Eloquence, which, like other beauty, is at once a pleasure and a power, delighting whom it compels. But, when I found the scholarly class more unfriendly than the multitude, I began to think I had chosen the wrong audience to address; that it was the People, not the Scholars, who were to lead in philosophic thought; and when you gave me a chance to be heard in Boston, and I preached on from year to year, great crowds of men, who were not readers but workers in the week, coming and continuing to listen to the longest of sermons, wherein great subjects were treated without respect to popular prejudice, ecclesiastical, political, or social, and that, too, without sparing the severest attention of the hearers; when I found these multitudes seemed to comprehend the abstract-

est reasoning, and truths most universal, and appeared to be instructed, set free, and even elevated to higher hopes both here and hereafter, and to noble character; when, with all my directness of homely speech, I found myself welcome in most of the Lecture halls between the Mississippi and the Penobscot, and even beyond them, having thence two or three hundred invitations a year; when the national crisis became nearer and more threatening, and I saw my Sentiments and Ideas visibly passing into the opinion and the literature of the People, and thence coming out in the legislation of New England and the other Northern States, — I thought it not quite time to withdraw, and my early purposes were a little shaken. I intended to continue some ten years more in severe practical work, till about sixty, then retire, not to lie down in the grave like a camel under his load at night, but hoping to enjoy a long quiet autumn of twenty years or so, when I might accomplish my philosophic and literary works, and mow up as provender for future time what I had first raised as green grass, and then mowed down to make into sound hay, but have now left, alas! either strown where it grew, or but loosely raked together, not yet carted into safe barns for the long winter, or even stacked up and sheltered against immediate spoiling by a sudden rain in harvest.

Besides, I felt quickened for practical work by

the great exigences of the Nation, the importance of the fight already going on between Despotism on one side, with its fugitive slave bills, New England kidnappers and sophists, in bar or pulpit, and Democracy on the other, with its Self-evident Truths, Unalienable Rights, and vast industrial and educational developments — a battle not yet understood, but destined to grow hot and red ere long, — and by the confidence I have always felt in the ultimate triumph of the Right and True, the Beautiful and Good. Moreover, I was encouraged in my course by the soundness and vigor of my bodily frame, not stout, perhaps, and strong, but capable of much and long-continued work of the most various kinds, not tiring soon, nor easily made ill, but quick recovering from both fatigue and sickness; and by the long average life of six generations of American fathers and mothers. But I have now learned by experience that it is not wise to cherish wide personal hopes in a narrow life, or seek to make an apple-tree larger than the orchard.

For some years, I have been warned that I was not only spending the full income of life, but encroaching a little on the capital stock. But what wise man even is always wise? The duties were so urgent, the call for help so imploring, the labor at once so delightful in its process and so prophetic of good results, and I felt such confidence in my bodily

power and ancestral longevity, that I did not sufficiently heed the gentle admonition; till, last year, in March, Nature at once gave way, and I was compelled to yield to a necessity above my will. I need not tell the fluctuations in my health since then; rather, my Friends, let me again thank YOU for the prompt and generous sympathy you gave then and ever since.

Immediately after my present illness, I left your Pulpit empty for a day. YOU wrote me a letter signed by many a dear familiar name, and but for the haste, I know it had been enriched with the signatures of all; it was dated at Boston, January 11. Your affection wrote the lines, and a kindred wisdom kept them from me till I was able to bear this unexpected testimonial of your sympathy and love. On Sunday, the sixth of March, while you were listening to—alas! I know not whom you looked to then,—my eyes filled with tears as I first read your words of delicate appreciation and esteem. My Friends, I wish I were worthy of such reverence and love; that my service were equal to your gratitude. I have had more than sufficient reward for my labors with you; not only have I seen a good work and a great prosper in my hands as you held them up, but in public, and still more in private, you have given me the sweetest, best of outward consolations—the grateful sympathy of earnest, thoughtful and religious men. If my public

life has been a battle, wherein my head grows bald, my beard turns grey, and my arm becomes feeble, before their time, it has been also a Triumph, whose crown is not woven of the red-flowered laurels of war, but of the olive, the lily, the violet, and the white rose of peace. I have no delight in controversy; when assailed, I have never returned the assault; and though continually fired upon for many years from the bar-room and the pulpit, and many another "coigne of vantage" betwixt the two, I never in return shot back an arrow, in private or public, until in the United States Court I was arraigned for the "misdemeanor" of making a speech in Faneuil Hall against that kidnapping in Boston, perpetrated by the public guardian of widows and orphans; then I prepared my *Defence*, which had been abler were I more a lawyer, though less a minister.

To compose sermons, and preach them to multitudes of men of one sort but many conditions, thereto setting forth the great Truths of Absolute Religion, and applying them to the various events of this wondrous human life, trying to make the Constitution of the Universe the Common Law of men, illustrating my thought with all that I can gather from the World of Matter, its use and beauty both, and from the World of Man, from human labors, sorrows, joys and everlasting hopes, — this has been my great delight. Your pulpit has been my joy and my throne. Though

Press and State, Market and Meeting-House, have been hostile to us, YOU have yet given me the largest Protestant audience in America, save that which Orthodox Mr. Beecher, who breaks with no theologic tradition of the New England Church, inspires with his deep emotional nature, so devout and so humane, and charms with his poetic eloquence, that is akin to both the sweet-briar and the rose and all the beauty which springs up wild amid New England hills, and to the loveliness of common life; I have given you my sermons in return, at once my labor and delight. My Life is in them, and all my character, its good and ill; thereby you know me better than I, perhaps, myself, — for a man's words and his face when excited in sermon and in prayer tell all he is, the reflection of what he has done. Sermons are never out of my mind; and when sickness brings on me the consciousness that I have nought to do, its most painful part, still, by long habit all things will take this form; and the gorgeous vegetation of the Tropics, their fiery skies so brilliant all the day, and star-lit too with such exceeding beauty all the night; the glittering fishes in the market, as many-colored as a gardener's show, these Josephs of the sea; the silent pelicans, flying forth at morning and back again at night; the strange, fantastic trees, the dry pods rattling their historic bones all day, while the new bloom comes fragrant out beside, a noiseless prophecy; the

ducks rejoicing in the long-expected rain; a negro on an ambling pad; the slender-legged, half-naked negro children in the street, playing their languid games, or oftener screaming 'neath their mother's blows, amid black swine, hens and uncounted dogs; the never-ceasing clack of women's tongues, more shrewd than female in their shrill violence; the unceasing, multifarious kindness of our hostess; and, overtowering all, the self-sufficient, West Indian Creole pride, alike contemptuous of toil, and ignorant and impotent of thought,—all these common things turn into poetry as I look on or am compelled to hear, and then transfigure into sermons, which come also spontaneously by night and give themselves to me, and even in my sleep say they are meant for YOU. Shall they ever be more than the walking of

> "a sick man in his sleep,
> Three paces, and then faltering"?

The doctors cannot tell; I also know not, but hope and strive to live a little longer, that I may work much more. Oh, that the truths of Absolute Religion, which Human Nature demands, and offers, too, from the Infinitely Perfect God who dwells therein, while He transcends the Universe, Oh, that these were an Idea enlightening all men's minds, a Feeling in their hearts, and Action in their outward life! Oh, that America's two and thirty thousand ministers, Hebrew,

Christian, Mormon, knew these truths, and to mankind preached Piety and Morality, and that Theology which is the Science of God and his two-fold Universe, and forgot their mythologic and misguiding dreams! Then what a New World were ours! Sure I would gladly live to work for this.

I may recover entirely, and stand before you full of brown health, equal to the manifold labors of that position, live to the long period of some of my fathers, and at last die naturally of old age. This to me seems most desirable, though certainly not most probable.

Or, I may so far recover, that I shall falter on a score of years or so, one eye on my work, the other on my body, which refuses to do it, and so urge my weak and balky horse along a miry, broken road. If this be so, then, in some still, little rural nook, in sight of town, but not too nigh, I may finish some of the many things I have begun, and left for the afternoon or evening of my days; and yet, also, from time to time, meet you again, and, with words of lofty cheer, look on the inspiring face of a great congregation. With this I should be well content; once it was the ideal of my hope.

In either of these cases, I see how the time of this illness, and the discipline alike of disappointment and recovery, would furnish me new power. Several times in my life has it happened that I have met with

what seemed worse than death, and, in my short-sighted folly, I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest!" Yet my griefs all turned into blessings; the joyous seed I planted came up Discipline, and I wished to tear it from the ground; but it flowered fair, and bore a sweeter, sounder fruit than I expected from what I set in earth. As I look over my life, I find no disappointment and no sorrow I could afford to lose; the cloudy morning has turned out the fairer day; the wounds of my enemies have done me good. So wondrous is this Human Life, not ruled by Fate, but Providence, which is Wisdom married unto Love, each infinite! What has been, may be. If I recover wholly, or but in part, I see new sources of power beside these waters of affliction I have stooped at; I shall not think I have gone through "the Valley of Baca" in vain, nor begrudge the time that I have lingered there, seeming idle; rainy days also help seed the ground. One thing I am sure of: I have learned the wealth and power of the grateful, generous feelings of men, as I knew them not before, nor hoped on earth to find so rich. High as I have thought of Human Nature, I had not quite done justice to the present growth of these beautiful faculties. Here and now, as so oft before, I have found more treasure than I dreamed lay hidden where I looked.

But if neither of these hopes becomes a fact, if the

silver cord part soon above the fountain, and the golden bowl be broke, let not US complain; a new bowl, and a stronger cord, shall serve the Well of Life for you. Though quite aware how probable this seems, believe me, I have not yet had a single hour of sadness; trust me, I shall not. True, it is not pleasant to leave the plough broken in the furrow just begun, while the seed-corn smiles in the open sack, impatient to be sown, and the whole field promises such liberal return. To say Farewell to the thousands I have been wont to preach to, and pray with, now joyous, and tearful now,—it has its bitterness to one not eighty-four, but forty-eight. To undo the natural ties more intimately knit of long-continued friendship and of love,—this is the bitter part. But if it be my lot, let not you nor me complain. Death comes to none except to bring a blessing; it is no misfortune to lay aside these well-loved weeds of earth, and be immortal. To YOU, as a Congregation, my loss may be easily supplied; and to me it is an added consolation to know that, however long and tenderly remembered, I should not long be missed; some other will come in my place, perhaps without my defects, possessed of nobler gifts, and certainly not hindered by the ecclesiastical and social hostility which needs must oppose a man who has lived and wrought as I. It will not always be unpopular justly to seek the welfare of all men. Let us rejoice that others may easily

reap golden corn where we have but scared the wild beasts away, or hewn down the savage woods, burning them with dangerous fire, and made the rich, rough ground smooth for culture. It was with grimmer fight, with sourer sweat, and blacker smoke, and redder fire, that the fields were cleared where you and I now win a sweet and easy bread.

What more shall I say to sweeten words of farewell, which must have a bitter taste? If I have taught you any great Religious Truths, or roused therewith Emotions that are good, apply them to your life, however humble or however high and wide; convert them into Deeds, that your superior Religion may appear in your superior Industry, your Justice and your Charity, coming out in your housekeeping and all manner of work. So when your

> "course
> Is run, some faithful eulogist may say,
> He sought not praise, and praise did overlook
> His unobtrusive merit; but his life,
> Sweet to himself, was exercised in Good,
> That shall survive his name and memory."

Let no fondness for me, now heightened by my illness, and my absence too, blind your eyes to errors which may be in my doctrine, which must be in my life; I am content to serve by warning, where I cannot guide by example. Mortal, or entered on

Immortal Life, still let me be your Minister, to serve, never your Master, to hinder and command. Do not stop where I could go no further, for, after so long teaching, I feel that I have just begun to learn, begun my work. "No man can feed us always;" welcome, then, each wiser guide who points you out a better way. On earth, I shall not cease to be thankful for your Patience, which has borne with me so much and long; for your Sympathy, nearest when needed most, and the examples of noble Christian Life, which I have found in some of you,

> "to whom is given
> The joy that mixes man with Heaven:
> Who, rowing hard against the stream,
> See distant gates of Eden gleam,
> And never dream it is a dream;
> But hear, by secret transport led,
> Even in the charnels of the dead,
> The murmur of the Fountain-head:
> Who will accomplish High Desire,
> Bear and forbear, and never tire, —
> Like Stephen, an unquenchéd fire,
> As looking upward, full of grace,
> He prayed, and from a happy place
> God's glory smote him on the face!"

Here they add to my joy; perhaps their remembrance will add to my delight in Heaven.

May you be faithful to your own Souls; train up

your Sons and Daughters to lofty character, most fit for humble duty; and to far cathedral heights of excellence, build up the Being that you are, with Feelings, Thoughts and Actions, that become "a glorious Human Creature," by greatly doing the common work of life, heedful of all the Charities, which are twice blest, both by their gifts and their forgiveness too. And the Infinite Perfection, the Cause and Providence of all that is, the Absolute Love, transcending the time and space it fills, OUR FATHER, and OUR MOTHER too, will bless you each beyond your prayer, forever and forever. Bodily absent, though present still with you by the Immortal Part, so hopes and prays

Your Minister and Friend,

THEODORE PARKER.

FREDERICKSTED, West-End, Santa Cruz,
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